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## CURRENT COMMENT.

In the course of his fracas with the National Council for the Prevention of War, Secretary Weeks has taken exception to the statement of the Council that more than eighty-five per cent of the Government's expenditures for 1924 will go for past and future wars. The Secretary quotes the Bureau of the Budget to the effect that expenditures for "military functions" will amount to only 32.7 per cent of the national outlay, and he even accuses the Council of acting in bad faith when it gives wide publicity to figures furnished by another department of the Government, the Bureau of Efficiency. The Council has now explained why the estimates of the two bureaux are at variance; first, because the Bureau of the Budget does not include the service of the public debt as an item of military expenditure, although all our national loans, except that issued for the financing of the Panama canal, have been war-loans; and second, because this same Bureau is dealing with *gross* rather than *net* expenditures, and its figures therefore give the impression, at first glance, that the self-sustaining postal service costs more than the totally dependent army and navy. This explanation is so convincing that we are led to expect the early retirement of Mr. Weeks from the contested sector.

ON the other hand, the Secretary of War makes a dead hit when he asks the members of the Council just how the disposition of the military forces can be changed, and expenses reduced. Mr. Weeks says he has received no definite reply; and here, we think, he has revealed the major weakness of the pacifist movement. The pacifists want the budget pared down, as we all do; but if they were as much interested in the causes of war as they are in the manifestations of militarism, they would not hesitate to come out for the withdrawal of every American soldier now abroad in Latin America or the Far East, on an imperialist enterprise. This would reduce expenditures, but it would do something more than that; it would give a setback to the adventurers who have now come to expect that American ships and American troops, provided at the taxpayers' expense, will follow them wherever they go, and back them up in everything they do, just as British ships and British troops have always followed and backed up British adventurers, in the building of their Empire.

THOSE Americans who are accustomed to think of the navy as a rather expensive agency for guarding American homes and hearthstones against the aggressions of wicked foreigners, will find other interesting naval duties set forth in an article in *American Industries*, written by Captain Luke McNamee under the special direction of Secretary Denby. It appears that the navy maintains a vigorous activity in portions of the world where there is much undeveloped natural wealth and considerable political instability. Captain McNamee lists in this category particularly China, Mexico, Cuba, Central America and the Near East. "We," says Captain McNamee, meaning, we assume, a small group of American privilegees, "have extensive interests in the Near East, especially in tobacco and petroleum." Therefore, he points out, the Government has kept for some years a flotilla of destroyers in Near Eastern waters, at a cost of four million dollars annually, in the interest of these interests. This patrol-duty, he admits, does not train the crews for service in time of war; but presumably it is worth four million dollars to some one. One destroyer is kept at Samson, Turkey, "to look after American tobacco-interests at that port"; and Captain McNamee adds that the American companies there "depend practically entirely on the moral effect of having an American man-of-war in the port to have their tobacco released for shipment." From the viewpoint of the American taxpayer, it is unfortunate that these favoured interests can not be persuaded to furnish their own moral effect at their own expense.

IN ratifying the so-called Chester concession to the Ottoman-American Development Company, the Turkish Government has borrowed a leaf from the diplomatic book of the big Slavic brother at Moscow. The Russian Government granted to American oil-interests generous concessions in the northern part of the island of Sakhalin, which is now in the possession of the Japanese Government. All the Americans have to do is to step in and take the oil-lands—if they can. Similarly, the Chester concession includes certain rights in the Mosul oil-fields, in territory over which the British Government gave itself a mandate, as part of the loot of the late war for the self-determination of small nations. Here we have a situation which may lead to considerable embarrassment and estrangement. The new concession includes the right to reconstruct Turkish ports and to build railways variously estimated at from 750 to 2000 miles in length, with the right to develop mineral and oil-lands along the railways. The French Government has already protested most vigorously against the grant, on the ground that it interferes with prior grants to French interests for railway-construction in this field; and the British Government has made it plain that as far as it is concerned, Turkish concessions, in the Mosul territory are nix. All in all, it would seem that the diplomats now reassembling at Lausanne are in for a lively session.

IT was back in 1896 that Admiral Colby M. Chester sailed to the Near East on an eleemosynary mission and returned with his substantial charter for exploration and development. In due course he retired from the navy, but retained his Turkish scrap of paper, out of which the Ottoman-

American Company has sprung. President Roosevelt made a strenuous effort to have the concession placed on a working basis, but as a practical matter the thing never seemed to get much forward. The next move developed at the peace-conference, where certain American interests showed an uncommon zeal in pushing the idea of an American mandate for Armenia; but, in spite of Mr. Wilson and the missionaries, that proved too much for Congress to swallow. Yet the Near East has seemed to hold a romantic attraction for the American Government, and since the beginning of 1919 considerable numbers of American destroyers have been buzzing about Levantine waters. The new move of the Turks is probably designed to increase the rivalries and suspicions among the Western politicians at Lausanne. It is not unnatural, however, that the shrewd Osmanli should make eyes at the only Great Power that has any real loose money to invest abroad. Those persons who are astonished to see the Harding Administration edging towards the side door of the imperialist stock-exchange known as the League of Nations, may find a possible explanation in these alluring possibilities for American privilege now looming up in Asia Minor.

THE Costa Rican delegation at the Pan-American Conference, now in session at Santiago, Chile, has caused something of a stir by proposing that recognition by the Government of the United States shall no longer be a requirement for full partnership in the activities of the Pan-American Union. As matters stand now, the membership of the Governing Board of the Union is limited to diplomatic representatives accredited to Washington, and the Secretary of State is the chairman of the body. If an unrecognized Government (as, for example, that of Mexico) wishes to get in on the proceedings, it must act through the representative of a Government that has made itself acceptable to Mr. Hughes's Department. The proceedings themselves are not, we take it, of any great importance; and yet it would be just as well if the forms of decency were observed.

IF the conferees at Santiago are looking for something real in the way of Pan-American relations, they may profitably turn their attention for a few moments to the free and independent Republic of Cuba. Recently the Government at Havana has been passing through a ministerial crisis, and now a dispatch from Washington tells us that General Crowder has handed President Zayas a memorandum which is said to contain the General's views of the matter in hand. This action was taken, so the dispatch says, at the direction of the Department of State, and the views expressed are those of the Department. Further than this, the correspondent tells us that in Havana the belief prevails that General Crowder "has delivered some sort of an ultimatum to the Zayas Government." If the delegates at Santiago do not understand why Mr. Hughes's Department is so much concerned with affairs at Havana, let them make a study of American investments in Cuba, with special attention to the new loan which is now being marketed in this country. If they can not then see the connexion, they will see it, perhaps very shortly, when each of them faces a similar situation in his own, his native land.

THE business of running a protectorate is a fine job, anyhow! The editor of *El Tiempo*, an opposition paper published in Panama, has just sent us a copy of his journal, with a request that we comment upon a petition published therein. This petition is addressed by *El Tiempo*, ostensibly in behalf of the Panamanian opposition, to the American Minister and the Governor of the Canal Zone. After denouncing the abuses of the native Government

now in power, and the "poisonous spirit of anti-Americanism" which prevails in certain quarters, the petition says: "Bear in mind, Sirs, that if the Government of the United States of America does not recognize in the proud and patriotic people of Panama the right to resort to revolution, which is the last means of obtaining justice, then that Government can not and should not, leave at liberty and even surround with security those who preside over the destinies of this country so that they might strangle the will of the people. . ." The petitioner thus offers the American Government the choice between a great deal more intervention and a great deal less; but inasmuch as no Government on this terrestrial ball is fitted to assume the responsibilities that arise out of a denial of freedom, there is really no honest alternative to withdrawal.

WE suspect that not many of the associates of Mr. Samuel Gompers in the labour-organizations will be enthusiastic about the temper and substance of the recent gratuitous attack, issued in his name and that of the American Federation of Labour, against the trustees of the American Fund for Public Service. The voice was that of Mr. Gompers, but the substance of his statement was of the sort that has been made familiar to us by some of his more purposeful associates in the American Civic Federation. The American Fund for Public Service was established to handle the \$800,000 which Mr. Charles Garland of Boston wished to devote to worthy social purposes. The ten trustees are citizens who have been prominent in the cause of civil liberty. Mr. Gompers has listed them in the manner that was reduced to an absurdity during the war by Mr. Archibald Stevenson. Thus, Professor Robert Morss Lovett is described as an intellectual revolutionary faddist; Rev. Harry F. Ward as "the most ardent pro-Bolshevik cleric in this country"; Dr. Judah L. Magnes as "a revolutionary pacifist and equally well-known for his opposition to the policies of America during the world-war"; while Mr. James Weldon Johnson is stigmatized as an associate of Mr. Oswald Garrison Villard, the Rev. John Haynes Holmes and "other pro-Soviet 'liberals'."

THESE characterizations seem somewhat inadequate, to say the least. Meanwhile, we note that the American Fund for Public Service, with a frankness which we commend to the various secretive organizations that indulge themselves in patriotic ostentation, has made public a report on its activities and expenditures during its first six months of life. The Fund, it appears, distributed small sums to various labour, educational and social-service organizations; and made a number of loans, of which the largest two, of \$25,000 each, went to the United Mine Workers, an organization within the A. F. of L., and to a labour-paper, the *Minnesota Daily Star*. This sort of distribution, we should think, would commend itself highly to the labour-organization which Mr. Gompers is supposed to represent.

By barring from our shores the wife of the President of the Russian Republic, who was planning to visit us on behalf of the work of the Russian Red Cross in feeding starving children, Secretary Hughes has again demonstrated the humanitarian superiority of his Government. The exclusion, declared Mr. Hughes, was decided upon as a rebuke to the Russian Government for having executed Monsignor Butchkavitch. Even before the execution took place, several organizations of red-blooded patriots had protested to the State Department that if Mrs. Kalinin, a peasant woman who does not speak English, were admitted here, she would effect the overthrow

of our institutions. Their melancholy prophecies, as well as the execution of Monsignor Butchkavitch, seem to have had an influence on Mr. Hughes; but it is not clear whether he was moved also by the recent appeal issued in Paris by one of the late Tsar's brothers, calling upon the Russian people to rise for God, for country, and for the grand dukes.

It was interesting to read in dispatches from Moscow to the New York *Times*, after the recent Russian Easter, that "the churches everywhere were crowded" at services that lasted from 11:30 Saturday night to three or four o'clock Sunday morning. Two days later it was equally interesting to read the editorial statement, in the same paper, that in Russia "saying mass is an act of counter-revolution." Recently all of the most respectable newspapers featured a dispatch from Berlin declaring that an iron-clad censorship was keeping all news from coming out of Russia. On the same day, some of the papers printed Associated Press dispatches of considerable length from Moscow, which were of a character distinctly uncomplimentary to the Russian Government. One day we read that Mr. Francis McCullagh, the correspondent of the New York *Herald*, had left Russia at the request of the authorities; and a few days later we found in the *Herald* a long, romantic dispatch from Mr. McCullagh, purporting to come from Moscow, which described scenes in the "cellar slaughterhouse" of the Cheka, and drunken orgies of the Communist leaders. This sort of thing takes us back to the good old days of 1918-19, when Lenin used to die monotonously in the intervals between his depositions by Trotzky; when Moscow and Petrograd were repeatedly burned to the ground or captured by Tsarist generals; and, in periods when news was scarce, the Soviet regime fell, in the newspapers, almost every Monday morning.

How much, we wonder, will the next generation profit by the experiences of the present generation at the hands of the war-time propagandist? Just now, there are certain symptoms of a popular disillusionment, but this may be due either to a permanent gain in common sense, or to a temporary overstretching and consequent relaxation of the faculty of belief. Sometimes, when an attempt is made to appeal to the new common sense, the response, or the lack of response, gives evidence of nothing more than a weariness which can hardly be expected to last for long, or to count for much in the long run.

FOR example, in the matter of the celebrated atrocities in Belgium, Mr. E. N. Bennett, late of the British army, has published certain materials which seem to indicate that the "Bryce Report" was in part a deliberate fabrication. These materials appear, together with Mr. Bennett's translation of the German White Book of 1915, in a volume entitled "The German Army in Belgium." Mr. Bennett's most interesting contention is that, contrary to the emphatic statement of the "Bryce Report," the civilian population made severe and repeated attacks upon the German troops; and in support of his case, he quotes a number of news-items from Belgian papers. This contention has impressed us deeply, not because we find in it any sort of justification for the conduct of the German army (the business of justifying murder, organized or unorganized, is not in our line), but because the veracity of the most famous propagandist document of the war has now been effectively called in question. From this point of view, Mr. Bennett's book is of capital importance, and it would certainly have created a furore if the public had now become severely critical of propaganda, rather than simply tired of it.

WITHIN recent years, the dominant spirit in the United States has become more conservative, as that in Russia has become more revolutionary; and yet it appears that the overseers of Harvard University are not ready yet to adopt the old Tsarist policy of discriminating against Jewish candidates for the higher learning. In Russia, the Jew was treated as a dangerous and superior person who would put the old ruling class out of business, if he were only given a fair chance. The overseers at Cambridge seem to be willing, on the other hand, to trust their own sons to look after themselves, in free association and competition with men of other races. At any rate, the board has voted against racial discrimination in the selection of candidates for admission to the College; and at the same time it has reversed President Lowell's policy of excluding Negroes from the freshman dormitories. The question of admission to the graduate schools was not touched upon by the overseers, or by the committee which reported to them; and the general principles laid down for the college are of course capable of being abridged in application. However, at the very least, the overseers have given us a good and sensible decision to which we may make reference in a pinch.

WE see that the "Leviathan" is now being advertised as the largest ship afloat, and it occurs to us that the expression may bear some relation to the size of the joke that is being played on the people of this country. The Shipping Board announces that in the process of refitting, the length and tonnage of the liner have been so increased that even the "Majestic" must now take second place. According to Admiral Benson, the ship has been done over in such an extravagant style that it may even be a bit too luxurious. When the old hulk was offered for sale, a year or so ago, no one would put up more than a junkman's price, for no one believed then, or yet believes, that the "Leviathan" can be hauled back and forth between New York and Europe at a profit. However, the Government has seen fit to blow in nearly ten million dollars on alteration and refurbishment, with no better prospect than that of maintaining the liner in operation at a continuous loss. The date of the initial sailing has been fixed for 4 July, and at that time all genuine patriots may be expected to gather at the waterfront to take their taxes out in glory.

FROM the general run of the press-dispatches, we get the impression that disillusionment is rather rare in France; and yet it is just possible that the correspondents at Paris do not see anything except what they want to see. For instance, they hardly intimate the existence of such a sentiment as that which inspired a cartoon recently published in *Le Progrès Civique*. Under the caption, "The Dialogue of the Dead," the picture assembles three ghostly warriors—a cavalier of the Religious Wars, a soldier of the First Republic, and a poilu. The morale of the first two is still very good, but the poilu is in a gloomy mood; the conversation runs as follows: "I, I fought for the faith!" "I, for Liberty." "And I—?" —but the sentence remains unfinished.

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## TOPICS OF THE TIME.

### PROTECTION OR JUSTICE ?

THE SUPREME COURT'S decision, by a vote of five to three, that the minimum-wage law of the District of Columbia was unconstitutional, dashed the hopes of our liberal brethren, and aroused them to indignant protest. Once more those Constitutional safeguards of personal freedom which the courts have found so useful for the protection of privilege, have been invoked to drive the exploited worker from the shelter of paternal laws. When we consider how the Negro, the Colonial subject and the conscientious objector have fared at the hands of the Supreme Court, we are quite ready to agree with our liberal friends that the Court's present concern for the rights of the individual seems slightly disingenuous; we doubt that this belated love of freedom is entirely sincere. Yet we can not altogether sympathize with the liberals in their disappointment, since freedom is hardly the strong point of liberal policy. Logically, it seems to us, their quarrel with the Supreme Court ought to centre on the usurpation by the judiciary of the prerogatives of the legislative branch of the Government.

Leaving aside the ulterior motives which may have prompted the Court's decision, we are interested in it because we believe that the rule of freedom, if generally adopted, would bring about a transformation in the condition of the labouring masses such as their liberal benefactors have never hoped for, or even imagined. We find it impossible to dissent from Mr. Justice Sutherland's contention that "to sustain the individual freedom of action contemplated by the Constitution is not to strike down the common good, but to exalt it; for surely the good of society as a whole can not be better served than by the preservation against arbitrary restraint of the liberties of its constituent members." We are in cordial agreement with this; and for this reason we should be most happy if we might see a case come before the Supreme Court, which, instead of involving an attempt to restrain the freedom of the employer, should bear upon an effort to extend the freedom of all classes without distinction.

In a civilization where wage-earners are too often reduced to a state of virtual serfdom by the surplus of labour which results from the private monopoly of land, the expression "freedom of contract" can evidently be used only in a Pickwickian sense. The minimum-wage law, however, is merely a well-meant attempt to better the condition of the serfs without doing serious injury to established institutions. Whoever thinks radically will seek the cause of injustice in the hope of ending it; and to him a minimum-wage law must seem as unjust as it is trivial. No one is capable of judging the value of a service but the person who pays for it; nor can anyone decide for another what is a satisfactory wage. To fix wages by legislation, is to substitute the doubtful wisdom of a bureaucracy for the natural law of demand and supply; and a minimum wage is but one step towards wage-fixing, as Mr. Justice Sutherland did not fail to observe.

It seems strange, does it not? that the would-be benefactors of labour, and even organized labour itself, try so manfully to protect the workers against a predatory economic system, and give so little thought to the manifest injustice and impracticability of a system against which there is need of protection. A recital of the protective laws accumulated in the course of years, as a result of the exertions of trade unions, of consumers' leagues, of charity organizations, and all the other agencies of liberalism, may sound imposing;

but the reports of housing commissions, the appeals for charity, and the temper of both sides in the continual labour-disputes, bear witness to the futility of such legislation. How much might have been accomplished by the same amount of effort, directed towards establishing the natural right of every man to have free access to natural opportunities, we can not of course pretend to know. We are inclined to think, however, that a little effort spent toward the establishment of economic justice is more profitable than a great deal expended upon clumsy and ineffectual attempts to protect the workers against a rapacious economic system, while leaving the system unchallenged.

Unfortunately, the competition for employment among the disinherited has led people to look upon the employer as a benefactor who provides work. We speak of one man hiring another; but as a matter of fact each employs the other, and in a new country where land is plentiful and cheap, men will not abandon their independent efforts unless tempted by wages which represent a fair approximation to the amount that their labour is likely to contribute to the joint enterprise. In such a country, where land is in constant competition with industry for the employment of labour, there is no need of minimum-wage laws or other checks upon the exploitation of the worker, for the simple reason that he is in a position to refuse to be exploited. He can demand for his work the same wage that he could earn by independent labour upon the land; in other words he is in a position to enjoy the full product of his labour.

The growth of the co-operative movement, and the appearance of banks owned by the workers, are indications of the ability of organized groups to enjoy the benefit of the capital which their labour produces; but even these developments leave the basic question unsolved; for as long as the common stock of raw materials embodied in the earth, and the opportunities which depend upon the use of land, remain unconditionally private property, these organizations will merely take their place beside the older corporations and act as monopolies in their turn, with the same oppressive consequences to those who are not included in the circle of privilege.

It is not necessary to enforce by law a fair division of the product of industry among those who unite in producing it. It is not only not necessary; it is impossible. But it would require no miraculous powers to frame a law which would recognize the equality of human rights in the use of the earth, and which would neither promise to ensure the profit of the employer, nor resort to the impertinence of deciding to what standard of living the workers might aspire. We should like to see the Supreme Court's concern for the rights of the individual put to the test by a case involving such a law as this. We think their love of liberty is of too tender growth to stand the strain, and that privilege would win the victory over freedom. But the Court would at least have difficulty in finding specious reasons for deciding against human rights. Moreover, its decision would have considerable educational value for people in general.

### A DELAYED MILLENNIUM.

SOMEWHERE in Europe, we believe, the International Labour Office of the League of Nations has been holding its fifth international conference. The gathering was scheduled to begin on 10 April, but we have failed to dig out of the news any report of the proceedings. The preceding conference of the Labour Office met with a similar neglect at the hands of the press. Ap-

parently no news-association now thinks it worth while to devote any attention to the solemn resolutions of this organization, which was once hailed as the builder of a new and better world.

The International Labour Office was created under the treaty of Versailles. In the projected scheme of peace and good will so widely advertised at the peace-conference, the Labour Office occupied a place second only in importance to the League of Nations itself, under which the Labour Office was to function. "Universal peace," wrote those staunch proletarians, M. Clemenceau, Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Wilson, in the preamble to that part of the treaty extolling the Labour Office, "can be established only if it is based on social justice."

In order to spread the gentle dew of social justice over the earth, the politicians of Versailles proceeded prudently to create the Labour Office. It was endowed with a Governing Body, the personnel of which was carefully hand-picked by the politicians. It was empowered to gather statistical material and to publish bulletins, duties which it has conducted with faithfulness and discretion. It was also empowered to hold international conferences at least once a year, for the purpose of discussing the problems of labour and devising legislation to deal with those problems. Its legislative function was twofold. It could pass recommendations, which any national parliament might adopt if it wished; and it could pass what were called draft international conventions. Its draft international conventions were to be submitted to the Governments within the League of Nations, and any Government was at liberty to ratify such conventions as it wished to observe, or to pretend to observe. Beyond this, the Labour Office had no authority as a legislative body. Moreover, in order to make sure that social justice should be achieved with decorum and propriety, the politicians reserved to themselves the right to select the delegates to the legislative conferences. It was decreed that a majority of the delegates should represent the Governments, and a minority should be selected, in equal proportion, from organizations of employers, and labour-organizations of the right sort.

The new era was launched with an international conference held in Washington in the fall of 1919, attended by 118 hand-picked delegates from forty-two countries. The first order of business was to decree the eight-hour day for workers in industry everywhere; and this provision was passed in the form of a draft international convention which caused much gratification among sentimental persons in all parts of the world who set store by such formalities. Subsequently, we understand, the convention was ratified by several small countries that already had eight-hour laws on their statute books; and so it was a famous victory. It is true that in the present period of industrial depression, the eight-hour day has been subjected to a good deal of violence in Europe. In Italy, for instance, the vigorous Signor Mussolini has passed over it with the Fascist steam-roller. In France the railway-workers, under the law passed last September, find themselves commonly working ten and twelve hours. In various other countries the hours of toil have yielded to persistent stretching. In other words, the principal legislative effort of the Labour Office, while it sounded well, did not carry far. Moreover, there were in the draft convention itself some interesting exceptions to this rule which it proposed. The workers of the Eastern countries, it appears, do not need as much leisure as their Occidental brethren. Therefore

a sixty-hour week was conceded for India, and a week of from fifty-seven to sixty hours for Japan. It is only fair to say that the workers of India were represented at the conference—by a delegate chosen by the British Government.

A number of other reformatory measures of an ectoplasmic nature came forth from the conference in the formidable shape of draft conventions. One of these granted to women workers a rest-period of six weeks, with benefits from the Government or from public insurance-funds, before and after confinement. This was passed with a proviso excepting from the rule colonies "where, owing to local conditions, its provisions are inapplicable"; and doubtless this exception was not displeasing to the imperialists. Another draft convention decreed that children under fourteen years should not be employed in industry. Here also a special exception was made for India and Japan, for which two countries the rule was modified to read, "children under twelve years." Thus, for purposes of industrial exploitation, under the new dispensation of social justice, the children of India and the children of Japan are considered adults on their thirteenth birthday, and may enjoy the privilege of the sixty-hour week. In a recent bulletin of the Labour Office, we noted a report from India setting forth the difficulty of determining whether a child was really thirteen and entitled to adult working hours; and we gathered from a somewhat obscure passage on this subject that the white overlords were working out a system of arbitral bodies—the personnel of which, we inferred, would not be inimical to the cause of cheap labour—which would determine the maturity of children in the interests of production. One of the draft conventions provided that persons under eighteen years should not be employed in night work, and here again, in the case of India, the age-limit was scaled down to fourteen years.

To what extent these draft conventions have been ratified "in principle" by the Governments within the League, we have not discovered; nor is this point, in our opinion, particularly important. Some weeks ago we noted that a member of the British Parliament asked the Government when it planned to take up the draft conventions passed at the conference of the Labour Office held in Geneva in the fall of 1921. The spokesman for the Government replied that the Government was not yet prepared to submit them to Parliament. As for the practical value of the "recommendations" of the Labour Office, that is well illustrated by one passed at the first conference. This recommendation is particularly interesting in view of the recent wholesale importations of alien labourers into the Ruhr valley by the French Government. It reads as follows: "The General conference recommends that the recruiting of bodies of workers in one country with a view to their employment in another country should be permitted only by mutual agreement between the countries concerned, and after consultation with employers and workers in each country in the industries concerned."

At subsequent conferences held under the auspices of the Labour Office, additional social reforms were duly offered to an indifferent world, and others were put forward and discreetly suppressed. At the gathering in Genoa in 1920, an eight-hour day for seamen was suggested; but the British delegates declared this idea too Utopian, so it was quietly tabled and the delegates contented themselves with proposing an eight-hour day for fishermen. At Geneva in 1922, the conference discussed a proposal for the establishment

of a special commission "to carry out a detailed inquiry into the living and labour conditions of the Eastern countries"; but somehow, when the subject came to a vote, the necessary quorum had dwindled away, so the matter was allowed to drop.

The Labour Office has its home in Geneva, the political Hollywood of the world, along with the League of Nations, Mr. Harding's World-Court, and other stock properties of the political movies. Its director is M. Albert Thomas. Its budget comes to some \$1,500,000 a year—not yet in American money. At Genoa, the Labour Office publishes its discreet statistics and its weekly bulletin of progress. Recently, for a period of fifty sterile days, this bulletin failed to appear. The printers of Switzerland were on a strike against shorter wages and longer hours. Apparently M. Thomas and his associates had forgotten to inform them that the millennium of social justice had arrived.

### THE QUESTION OF DIVORCE.

More than a quarter of a century ago Elizabeth Cady Stanton saw the true character of the movement for an amendment to the Federal Constitution giving Congress the power to legislate on marriage and divorce. She saw its true character and warned the women of America against it. After pointing out that the movement was inspired by people who considered our divorce-laws too liberal and really intended, under the plea of making them "uniform," to make them narrow, Mrs. Stanton went on to say:

As we are still in the experimental stage on this question, we are not qualified to make a perfect law that would work satisfactorily over so vast an area as our boundaries now embrace. I see no evidence in what has been published on this question of late, by statesmen, ecclesiastics, lawyers and judges, that any of them have thought sufficiently on the subject to prepare a well-digested code, or a comprehensive amendment to the national Constitution.

So far as this paper can see, the situation has not changed perceptibly since 1894, when these words were written. Statesmen, ecclesiastics, lawyers and judges are quite as incompetent to speak upon the question as they were in Mrs. Stanton's day; and when they do speak, their pronouncements are likely to be marvels of ignorance and inhumanity. As for the press, it rarely touches upon the subject of marriage and divorce, except to treat it in alarmist fashion, to portray the alleged collapse of the American home, or to prophesy a dire fate for a country which dares to be even mildly humanitarian in its divorce-laws. We are, as a people, quite as casual as ever in our attitude towards this question.

Mrs. Stanton said further:

There are many advantages in leaving all these questions, as now, to the States. Local self-government more readily permits of experiments on mooted questions which are the outcome of the needs and convictions of the community. The smaller the area over which the law extends, the more pliable are the laws. By leaving the States free to experiment in their local affairs, we can judge of the working of different laws under varying circumstances, and thus learn their comparative merits. Otherwise the whole nation might find itself pledged to a scheme that a few years would prove wholly impracticable.

Then she adds, with an old-fashioned touch: "Not only is the town meeting, as Emerson says, 'the cradle of American liberties,' but local self-government is the nursery of Yankee experiment and wisdom."

It would be interesting to know who or what persuaded the General Federation of Women's Clubs to

commit itself, as it did recently, to the idea of a uniform law of marriage and divorce. Did the Federation, we wonder, give a hearing to that pair of clergymen who have been lobbying for such a law so persistently for so many years? We think it is more likely that they were moved, as we all are, by the reiteration of the phrase itself, with its highly emollient qualities; our American tendency is to be predisposed to favour anything that calls itself "uniform" or "model" or "standard."

But it is a mischievous movement that the clubwomen have embraced. Hitherto, it has taken two forms. One has been a rather weak agitation for an amendment to the Federal Constitution which would enable Congress to legislate on marriage and divorce. The other, known as the Pennsylvania movement, has been much stronger; it has contented itself with urging the adoption by all the States of a "uniform" law of marriage and divorce. This act is sometimes described as a "model act"; but of course in order to succeed, it must represent a compromise among the conflicting points of view of the various States.

Similarly, we have seen it suggested that the "model law" which the General Federation of Women's clubs intends to push is fairly liberal in its provisions. The prospect is, however, that no matter how liberal their bill may be, the clubwomen will find that they can not get it adopted without subjecting it to enormous pressure from those organizations which wish either to make divorce possible on one ground only, or to abolish it entirely. These organizations, whose opposition to divorce is based upon religious beliefs, naturally show a good deal of religious fervour in their crusades against it; and this has gained them an influence on American politicians which is out of all proportion to their numerical strength. A liberal bill is therefore quite likely to be whittled down into something quite illiberal before it becomes a law.

In matters of commerce and traffic, there is everything to be said for uniform legislation. For example, a uniform bill of lading is an obvious convenience. A uniform divorce-law might also be a convenience, if it were the right kind; but what seems right to the people of Kansas might seem entirely wrong to the people of New York. The larger the area over which a law operates, the less likely it is to be satisfactory to all the people whom it affects. Moreover, it must be remembered that regulation of commerce and regulation of human relations are two entirely different things; and in view of this fact, would it not seem wiser to hold to the present diversity in our divorce-laws, than to run the risk of having uniform regulations dictated by people who do not recognize any distinction between commerce and human relations? When the advocates of a uniform divorce-law tell us with proper horror in their voice that Mrs. Brown is a divorced woman under the Illinois law but not under the law of Oklahoma, the only sensible comment is: "Well, what of it?" Obviously she can not live in both States at once; then why should she not live in that commonwealth which gives her the status she desires? This may entail inconvenience; but some such adjustment is surely far better for her than to be rendered helpless by a divorce-law which may have the abstract merit of being country-wide, but which at the same time and by virtue of that very quality of uniformity, closes the door upon her escape from a condition which, for whatever reason, is no longer tolerable. If one examines the statements of the advocates of uniform divorce-laws, made before the

Judiciary committee of the House of Representatives or the various State legislatures, one finds that they have shown much concern over the plight of Mrs. Brown whose divorce, valid in Illinois, is not recognized in Oklahoma; but one does not find that they have shown any concern whatever for the mated couple who can not or will not establish adultery or three years desertion or physical cruelty as the grounds for their divorce. We are reminded here of a note with which an enlightened clergyman sent a young couple to one of his colleagues. It ran something in this fashion: "I hope your church puts nothing in the way of your marrying these young people, one of whom has been divorced on the ground of incompatibility. My church demands adultery."

American women owe a great deal to the comparatively liberal divorce-laws of some of the States. This country had no liberal legislation on this subject until 1860, when that fine old visionary, Robert Dale Owen—son of Robert Owen, English social reformer and exponent of co-operation—put through the Indiana State legislature a fairly liberal law. Before that time English visitors (totally disregarding our favourite American theory that in pioneer countries women enjoy a privileged position) commented on the unenviable status of American wives. Their impotence, said the visitors, was only equalled by their shrill querulousness. Those who want to know something of the status of American women in pioneer times should read Mrs. Trollope's account of them, written in the 'forties or thereabouts. But as soon as Indiana passed a law enabling wives to free themselves from intolerable domestic yokes, women who had found the bonds of wedlock unendurable, began migrating into that State, establishing their residence—usually on money advanced by their fathers or mothers—and thus securing their divorce and their liberty. Indiana's example spread, with the result that the position of American wives began to show a steady improvement.

Under the circumstances, we are inclined to think that the Federation of Women's Clubs, if it really wants liberal divorce-laws, might much more profitably devote its time to a study of the Scandinavian divorce-laws; or for that matter, the law passed not so very long ago by our own State of Washington. If we are not mistaken, that Commonwealth, which has not, unfortunately, shown itself to be enlightened upon many subjects, has now upon its statute-books a law providing that after a couple has been separated for five years, either husband or wife may have a divorce for the asking, without giving further grounds for the application than the mere statement that the separation has lasted five years. If the separation has not lasted five years, those who are reluctant to seek divorce on sensational grounds, or who have no sensational grounds to offer, may make application on the plea of incompatibility; though of course a case on such a plea is open to contest. This seems a fairly decent and humane arrangement; and we put it to the club-women in all good faith: Is it not better to attempt to secure such legislation in other States than to support a movement which may produce a law that is at the same time general and oppressive?

## MISCELLANY.

My interest in Canada, which began in earnest about fifteen years ago, gets on its high horse once or twice a year, and starts on the rampage as keen as ever. It was set going again last month by the fuss made over Canada's "independent exercise of the treaty-making

power." The Canadian Government and ours, it seems, came to an understanding on some matter of fishing-rights—I have forgotten what it was, but I think it had something to do with halibut—and the negotiations with Mr. Hughes were carried on, not by the British Ambassador, but by the Canadian Minister of Marine and Fisheries, Mr. Ernest Lapointe. Some journalists took this as a sign that the British Empire had definitively resolved itself into the British Commonwealth of Nations. I doubt this; but if so, what of it? For practical purposes, the Commonwealth will differ from the Empire about as much as one of our trusts differs from its good old self, after an application of the Sherman Act. I confess that what chiefly interested me in the transaction was the thought of how profitably Mr. Hughes could take a few lessons in public speaking from Mr. Ernest Lapointe, while he had him so conveniently at hand.

CANADA has produced some of the finest public speakers of our time. I remember attending a banquet in Pittsburgh, many years ago, as the guest of the Canadian Club, where we were regaled by several pretty good American speakers. At the end, when every one was more or less jaded and ready to go home, Mr. Charles Marcil, who was Deputy Speaker of the Dominion House of Commons at the time, put us all on tiptoe again with a speech that has remained in my memory as a model of elegance, impressiveness, substance and suavity. At the end of his first dozen sentences, he had completely effaced all the speakers who preceded him.

It was quite in the style of speeches that Sir Wilfrid Laurier used to make, quite in the grand manner—the natural and habitual grand manner, not the grand manner assumed for an occasion. There are few such speakers. As a rhetorician of the first class—a rhetorician, that is, who really has something to say that is worth saying—Mr. Rodolphe Lemieux, who was Postmaster-General under Laurier, is probably unsurpassed. It seems odd to think of a postmaster-general as a great public speaker, perhaps because in this country the appointment usually goes to a politician of the wheelhorse type, like Mr. Burleson or Mr. Hays. Although Mr. Bourassa does not do as much with public affairs now as formerly, there is still, I dare say, no one like him for stirring up a popular audience from its lowest depth of emotion. No doubt it is still worth a trip to Montreal to see him electrify a crowd of four or five thousand French Canadians assembled on the Place d'Armes.

CANADA, as I observed many years ago, has two advantages over the United States in the hard and tedious process of becoming a civilized country. One is that Canada has two official languages instead of one. Even in the English-speaking areas there is enough French going so that the citizen can hardly help taking in a little of it; and this puts him some short way, at least, towards knowing one literature besides his own. Perhaps the average Canadian does not much avail himself of this advantage, but nevertheless he has it and we have not. The second is that great arteries of trade and travel run through Canada between the Orient and Europe, and this has a tendency (if there be such a word) to cosmopolitanize and thereby to civilize the Canadian. It is thus, I think, that the Canadian will remain a nominal member of the British Empire long after everything of practical value to him has disappeared from this connexion.

I REMEMBER, many years ago, seeing a prodigious lot of strange flowers growing out of a small bit of rich alluvial soil that was traversed by a busy trunk line of

railway. Most of them were quite new to me, and some of those that I knew were foreign to the locality. After puzzling over them for some time I decided that their seeds must have been carried by the passing freight-cars which came from all parts of the country. In a similar way, civilizing influences are blown off these through routes of trade and travel, and some of them take root. The Canadian's instinct is to look to the East and West for his cultural fertilizations, rather than to the South; and it would still be so to some extent, I think, if the South afforded him much more to draw upon than it now does.

It is quite remarkable—at least, I noticed it on my own journeyings in Canada, and I am told that now the proportion is even larger—that so many of the passengers on the transcontinental trains are on their way to Europe from the East or to the East from Europe. They stop off now and then at points of interest, but the Canadian Pacific Railway is really a highway for them. The passenger-lists of steamers, too, I hear, show relatively a smaller proportion of ocean-travellers originating in Canadian towns, than is the case with us. In crossing the ocean, especially in summer time, I have repeatedly been struck by the number of my fellow-passengers who hailed from small towns in the United States; and a friend told me last week that out of, I think, 820 passengers on one ship's list that he examined, 660 were from small inland cities and towns. This is a good thing. Probably the conditions under which they travel tend considerably to immunize them against every kind of unaccustomed or alien influence; yet in one way or another, some of it must "take."

JOURNEYMAN.

## POETRY.

### TO SUB-OFFICIAL CHANG, ON THE FESTIVAL OF THE MOON.<sup>1</sup>

(Translated by Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.)

The fine clouds have opened and the River of Stars is gone,  
A clear wind blows across the sky and the moon widens its  
wave,

The sand is smooth, the water still, no sound and no  
shadow—

As I offer you a cup of wine, asking you to sing.  
But so sad is your song and so bitter your voice  
That, before I finish listening, my tears become a rain . . .  
"Where Lake Tung-t'ing is joined to the sky by the lofty

Nine-Top Mountain,  
Dragons, crocodiles, rise and sink, apes, flying foxes  
whimper . . .

At a ten to one risk of death, I have reached my official post,  
Where lonely I live and hushed, as though I were in hiding.  
I leave my bed, afraid of snakes; I eat, fearing poisons;  
The very air of the lake smells, distilling evil odours . . .  
Yesterday, by the district office, the great drum was sounding  
The crowning of an Emperor, the changing of the State.  
The edict granting pardons runs a thousand li a day,  
All those who were to die have had their sentences commuted,  
The unseated are promoted and exiles are recalled,  
Corruptions are abolished, clean officers appointed.  
I was recommended, but the governor would not listen  
And has only transferred me to this barbaric place.

My rank is very low and useless to refer to;  
They might punish me with lashes in the dust of the street . . .  
Most of my fellow-exiles are now returning home—  
A journey which, to me, is a heaven beyond climbing."  
. . . Stop your song, I beg you, and listen to mine,  
A song that is utterly different from yours—  
"To-night is the loveliest moon of the year.  
All else is with fate, not ours to control;  
But, refusing this wine, may we choose more to-morrow?"

HAN YÜ.

## RUSSIA'S NEW ECONOMIC POLICY.

"How is it in Russia now?" The question was asked in the crowded ante-room of the Russian Embassy in Berlin. The gaily dressed woman to whom it was addressed puffed at her cigarette before replying. "Oh, life is very much as it used to be," she said. "You need more money in order to live well. But otherwise there really hasn't been much change."

The first things that strike one's eye after arriving in Russia would seem to bear out this impression. Of a Tolstoyan or Christian communist organization of society there is not a trace. The traditional contrasts of wealth and poverty, of luxury and misery, have not disappeared in Soviet Russia. In Moscow and Petrograd, as in Berlin and Vienna, ragged beggars haunt the entrances of the expensive cafés and theatres and cabarets. Gone are the days when food and clothing were rationed, when houses were occupied rent-free, when municipal services (assuming that they functioned at all) were supplied without charge. Now practically everything, from a street-car ride to a loaf of bread, is bought and paid for in Russia, just as in any other country.

"It's the Nep." This is the phrase that one hears most often in Moscow to-day. Nep, it should be explained, is the popular abbreviation for "new economic policy," the generally accepted term for the Russian Government's change of policy in 1921 in abandoning the system of rigid war-time communism which had prevailed up to that time. I asked many people in Russia, both Communists and non-Communists, why the Nep had come, and received many different answers. No doubt many factors contributed to bring it about. The insistence of the peasant-majority of the population on free trade, on the right to sell their products in the open market, was probably the most important cause of the break-down of a system which forbade private trade and subjected the peasants' surplus produce to requisition. There were many subsidiary causes as well: the break-down of the Communist revolutionary movements in Western Europe; the exhaustion of the country's resources by the world-war, the blockade and the civil war; the failure of the country's industries to achieve adequate production under the old system of over-centralized management. In any case, whatever its causes, the Nep is here in Russia to-day. It dominates everything. It explains everything. One observes the extraordinary revival of life and activity in Moscow and Petrograd, the repaved streets and repaired buildings, the reopened shops, the lighted store-windows. "It's the Nep, with the free trade. People are no longer afraid of the Cheka when they buy and sell." One asks why unprofitable State factories are closed, even at the cost of increasing unemployment, why the Government's appropriations for education are so meagre. The answer is always, "It's the Nep. What can we do? The Government has no money. We simply have not the resources to keep up factories that can not pay their own way; and we must restore the bases of our industrial life, our coal-mines and steel-mills, before we can support our schools properly."

In spite of external appearances, I think it would be hasty and inaccurate to assume that the Nep implies a frank and complete surrender to private capitalism on the part of the Russian revolutionary Government. The best proof that no such surrender has taken place may be found in the attitude of mingled hatred and fear with which the beneficiaries of the Nep regard the Soviet power. I once talked with a typical Nepman, as the people who have grown rich under the new

<sup>1</sup> The fifteenth night of the eighth month.

policy are generally called in Russia. He was making a comfortable living by buying up the silver and carpets and jewellery of the old bourgeoisie and selling them, at highly inflated prices, to other Nepmen and foreigners. He asked me anxiously whether I thought the Allies might intervene again in Russia. When I replied in the negative he observed sadly: "Then I must go to America." "But why?" I asked. "You seem to be making out very well here." "Yes," he answered. "But we lack a sense of security. We have no influence on the Government, and we never know when some new law or regulation will sweep away all our profits."

The longer one stays in Russia, the more one comes to understand this man's viewpoint. For the superficial triumphs of the Nepmen have not brought any corresponding sense of stable and permanent power. The successful speculator in Russia to-day can eat and drink and dress much better than the ordinary citizen. He can purchase seats at the opera and attend the more luxurious cabarets. He can travel first-class on the railways. In short, he has almost all the visible advantages which accompany the possession of wealth in any country. But in Russia, contrary to the almost universal rule in modern society, wealth does not carry with it political power. The Nepman may flourish materially, but in his political life he is little better than a pariah. He can not, for example, either vote or hold office. Here and there he may secure favours by bribing minor officials. But he has absolutely no influence upon the inner circles of the Communist party which shape the direction of Russia's foreign and domestic policies. There is no such intimate *liaison* between the wealthiest Nepmen and the Council of People's Commissars as one takes for granted between the captains of finance and industry and the political Governments in America, France, England and Germany.

In order to appreciate how widely the status of the Nepman differs from that of the American capitalist, one should compare the Moscow *Pravda* or the Khar-kov *Communist* with the New York *Times* or the Chicago *Tribune*. The Russian speculator who makes a fortune by cornering the available market-supply of lard or tea or sugar, need expect no laudatory press-articles, in which the public's indebtedness to his thrift, industry and foresight is duly pointed out. At best the Communist press is barely inclined to tolerate the Nepman as a necessary evil. Should he overstep the limits which are marked out for him, he must reckon with a pitiless storm of denunciation in the papers, without hearing a single voice raised in his behalf. He could not, if he would, set up journals to champion his own viewpoint. Under the proletarian dictatorship only Communist political papers are allowed to appear.

Political suppression is not the Nepman's only grievance against the Soviet Government. Even in his chosen field of making money he is checked at every turn. He enjoys a pretty free hand in trading within the country; and it is here that most of the Nep fortunes are made. But if he should wish to import or export anything, he must first convince the Commissariat for Foreign Trade that his purchases or sales are essential to the country's economic welfare. The Nepman can not get any real grip upon industry or finance. All the large Russian factories are in the hands of the State. If the Nepman should lease from the Government one of the small plants which are not working, he would find himself bound by limitations which do not exist in other countries. He could not use his factory for speculative purposes. He would be compelled to produce specified goods in specified quantities within a given period of time, on pain of

forfeiting his lease. He could not sell or transfer his plant, or close it down arbitrarily, or use it as a pawn in stock-exchange manipulations.

In finance the Russian Nepman has still less chance to satisfy his will to economic power. Banking and credit constitute almost a State monopoly in Russia. In the first days of the new economic policy, practically all financial transactions were carried on through the State Bank, a purely governmental institution. Later, the reviving Russian industry's pressing need for credit led to a relaxation of this concentration of financial power. The Co-operatives set up their own bank. Two or three other banks were created, with participation by the State, with a view to making industrial credits more liquid and mobile. But private capital plays no important rôle in any of these institutions. The Russian financial system serves first of all the State trusts, then the Co-operatives. The financing of private industrial and commercial undertakings is the least of its concerns. Under present conditions, the Russian banking-system can not be used either as an instrument of power in the hands of a few individuals or as a support for the development of private capitalist industries.

Should the ambitious Nepman turn to land-speculation as a means of putting his fortune on a more stable basis, he would encounter similar obstacles. He could acquire only so much land as he would undertake to cultivate. If he attempted to buy up large tracts of land in the hope of realizing a handsome unearned increment from railways which might be built or cities which might grow up in the future, he would run into all sorts of snags. In the first place, his purchase would be illegal, so far as it affected land which he had no intention of using for productive purposes. Then, even if he should find means of evading these legal restrictions, he would find his venture unprofitable, because the Soviet Government places an equal tax upon used and unused land.

So, while the Nepman may possess most of the visible wealth in present-day Russia, he is pretty effectively shorn of the power which goes with this wealth in other countries. He has no comforting sense of kinship with the Government. He finds almost all the ordinary methods of building up a large fortune partially or completely barred to him. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising if he sometimes looks wistfully to America, as to a sort of capitalist Paradise, where there is no ruling Communist party, no competition with private business on the part of the State, no interference with every man's God-given instinct to become as rich as he can.

This desire to leave Russia, although general, is not universal among the Nepmen. Some of them feel that the Soviet Government has entered upon a policy of concessions to private capital which will not end until the socialist achievements of the revolution have been completely whittled away. They point to the desperate straits of some of the State industries, to the important part which private initiative has played in the revival of trade in the large cities. It can not be denied that in economic competition the average Communist State administrator is at a great disadvantage as compared with the average Nepman. The number of Communist party-members who have had either technical training or business-experience is small. Their resolute, fanatical idealism, mobilized and given direction by the strict party-discipline, enabled them to achieve amazing feats of leadership during the civil war. But the administration of modern industry, especially under the peculiarly difficult conditions which

war and blockade imposed upon Russia, is a more complicated and difficult task than the direction of the fairly simple warfare against the Whites and the Poles. The newly appointed Communist factory-manager who served with distinction in Budenny's Red cavalry or successfully led a guerrilla band against Kolchak, often stands helpless and confused before the problems of getting fuel for his plant, of buying his raw material and selling his products under the most advantageous conditions. This is not to say that the Communists have made a total failure of their work of industrial administration. On the contrary they have, I think, done far better than could reasonably have been expected, in view of their previous lack of experience and their present appalling difficulties. But it is an undeniable fact, which is freely recognized in the Russian press and in every political and economic public discussion, that the Russian State industry to-day depends to a positively dangerous degree upon the co-operation of former merchants, engineers and factory-owners who are inimical or at best indifferent to the ideals of the Soviet regime.

The Communist worker, who is likely to be the manager of a Russian factory, usually has two non-Communist assistants; one of them an engineer, entrusted with the technical side of the work; the other a commercial agent, who attends to the buying and selling of materials. If the manager himself is well acquainted with engineering details and methods of accounting, he can check and control the work of the assistants. But if, as is often the case, he has gained all his business-experience during the comparatively short time which he has spent on the job, he is likely to find himself cheated and overreached at every turn. True, the State does not rely solely upon the manager for the detection of abuses. The factory-committee is supposed to report cases of suspected sabotage or corruption on the part of the bourgeois experts. The agents of the Gapaoo, or State police, are active in ferreting out instances of "economic counter-revolution." The Workers' and Peasants' Inspection is another State agency that exercises more or less constant supervision over the State industries. But all these instruments of control suffer from one common defect: lack of technical knowledge and experience.

Were the present balance of forces to remain permanent, it would be difficult to predict a brilliant future for Russia's experiment in socialized industry. The inexperienced idealism of the Communist would always be a poor match for the greed and cunning of the Nepman. But the Russian Communists are determined that the present balance of forces shall not remain permanent. They are quite conscious of the many weak spots in the present organization of Russian industry, and are trying desperately to strengthen them. In message after message, Lenin drives home, with slight variations, the same stern exhortation: Work and study unceasingly. Otherwise you will perish.

This exhortation is already finding many concrete responses. The Communist party sends out circulars to all its members, impressing upon them the duty of instructing the workers, as far as possible, in the elementary facts of industrial production, of training them gradually to take a more and more responsible part in the management of industry. The Russian papers have one department that is quite unknown to American journalism, the *Rabochaya Zhizn*, or Workers' Life. In this department are printed scores of letters which come from factory-workers, making complaints, offering suggestions, keeping the higher authorities in close touch with actual conditions. Of

even greater immediate practical significance are the special courses for the higher education of workers, which were established all over Russia after the revolution. Out of these courses, it is hoped, will come the "red specialists" of the future—the working-class engineers, technicians and administrators who will gradually replace the hostile experts of the old regime.

The impression which one carries away from Russia in the new phase of the revolution is likely to be a little confused and contradictory. Certainly the woman in the Embassy who declared that nothing was really changed could not boast of very sharp eyes. On the other hand, there are few revolutionists who would profess to see all their hopes realized in the poverty-stricken Russia of the Nep.

What one sees in Russia to-day is a struggle, no less desperate and fascinating because it is less clear-cut and spectacular than the military conflict between Reds and Whites which one could follow on the maps in 1919 and 1920. On one side, the forces of private greed, given greater scope by the new economic policy and powerfully reinforced by the inexperience of the Communist State apparatus, the cultural and economic backwardness of the Russian people, and the extreme poverty to which the country has been reduced by war, blockade and famine, seem to be preparing the way for a reversion to capitalist normalcy in Russia. On the other hand, the Communists, who have certainly not given up their goal of a socialist State, have succeeded in saving out of the debris of their more ambitious aspirations complete possession of political power, together with what might be called the key-positions in Russian industry and finance. Barring some quite improbable catastrophic turn in the development of the revolution, the competition between the collectivist and individualist tendencies in Russian life is likely to go on indefinitely. Both the Communist and the Nepman are strongly entrenched, and neither can very well be eliminated in a day. The issue of the duel between communism and the anti-communist tendencies, which may be loosely summed up in the phrase Nep, depends upon many things: upon Russia's harvests during the next few years, upon the course of events in Europe, upon the relations which may be established between the Soviet Government and foreign capital. It depends most of all, in my judgment, upon the success and speed with which the Communists develop a technique of industrial administration that is commensurate with their boundless energy and passionate creative will.

WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN.

### WALTER VON MOLO.

In the course of the last ten years, Walter von Molo has achieved recognition in Germany. To-day he is one of the most widely read and most noteworthy novelists, and well merits the attention of readers in other countries; for he represents a particular aspect of the German character: its inner radiance and its secure mastery of life, as they are disclosed to us in the events of German history. Molo's work<sup>1</sup> is historical and at the same time modern; so modern in fact, that his historical novels, as for instance "Ein Volk wacht auf" (a people awakens), give the impression of being fashioned out of material furnished by current events, or of having been written with a political purpose.

Like most writers of historical novels, Molo is under

<sup>1</sup> Molo's works are published by Albert Langen, Munich. "Walter von Molo und sein Schaffen" (Walter von Molo and his works) is published by H. M. Elster, Munich, 1920.

the spell of the heroic: yet he is a sincere democrat, whose main concern is always with the people. In a far greater degree than other famous writers of historical romance, he has a keen perception of the vital relation between the leader and the masses. Because he understands both and sympathizes with both, because he knows how to portray them, he is one of the few German writers accepted by the "left" and the "right" alike. He is, indeed, the link that connects the various professional and cultural circles of Germany; in short, he is a true poet of the people.

Walter von Molo was born in Austria in 1880. As his name shows, his father was an Italian; his mother was of Rhenish-Prussian origin. One is therefore not surprised to find in him the passion and the quick mobility of the Romance nations, coupled with Germanic depth and Northern gravity; a sunny animation sustained by stubborn energy; a glowing fantasy steadied by a thorough, analytic mind; poetic power balanced by practical good sense. His life clearly shows the many-sidedness of his mind and talents. A sensitive, delicate child, ailing and reserved, he gained by the careful pursuit of sports, sufficient health to sustain his ambition and energy. The forced solitude and idleness of his ailing years must, indeed, have powerfully strengthened his passionate longing for an active life. In school he was just the average student, betraying no aptitude in any special direction. Later he studied mechanical and electrical engineering in the Technische Hochschule in Vienna, and became an engineer. For ten years he was patent engineer in the Viennese Ministry for Public Works, during which time he edited several technical reviews. He also wrote two books on technical subjects, each of which ran into several editions. Until 1913, he contributed to technical periodicals. But several years before that time his interest in his profession had begun to slacken, while his poetical leanings asserted themselves with increasing urgency.

The year 1904 saw his first attempt at literature, in the shape of a volume entitled "Studentenerinnerungen" (memories of student-life), which was followed by a sporting-novel, and later by a sociological novel, "Wie sie das Leben zwangen" (how they conquered life), which went through three editions in the course of a few years. Molo the novelist was a success from the first. In 1906, he published "Klaus Tiedemann, Kaufmann" (Klaus Tiedemann, merchant), a novel not particularly new in plot, but new in its conception and presentation. A mob-scene in this work, where a crowd, infuriated by a mine-disaster, storms the house of a coal-operator, shows for the first time the claws of the lion: there is no epic breadth of wearisome detail; nothing that is not absolutely necessary to give the scene the clearest, most impressive setting.

Since that time Molo's novelistic style has been called the dramatic style. As his development carried him towards maturity, his style, depending on dialogue and action only, became increasingly striking. His historical novels are perhaps the shortest of their kind in all literature; presenting as they do only bare essentials, concrete events in their sharpest outlines, moments of the most dramatic significance; all calculated to produce the most powerful impression. In marked contrast with Molo stand such epic poets as Gerhart Hauptmann and Jakob Wassermann. Let him who seeks relief from broad, long-winded and heavy epopees, turn to Molo. In him, one finds something that is lacking in many German epic poets: a quick, living ethos, unencumbered by rhetoric, by long sentences; here everything is spare, simple and clear.

Thus Molo very soon revealed spiritual power and emotional depth, which, as he says, are the only justification of all artistic endeavour. In 1907, he began to turn his attention to the present, and wrote several short novels. "Unerbittliche Liebe" (love inexorable); "Die törichte Welt" (the foolish world); "Gezähmter Eros" (tamed love); "Wallfahrer zur lieben Frau" (pilgrims of love), appeared in succession. The subject is always the same: love in its everyday aspects, marital life, and the problem of parenthood. Both the problems and his solutions of them are still youthfully strained, but compelling; and they are presented with an impressive seriousness of purpose. An occasional gleam of humour already begins to light up his pages. It is not unimportant to note also that the author is an extremely painstaking workman.

Up to this time his characters, like himself, had lived with their time, not shirking the hardships of its spiritual strife; determined to achieve intellectual freedom. But soon he found that to a delineator of mankind the present offers insufficient scope. So he took up with zest the study of history, in order to get closer to humanity. The turning point of his career is marked by his discovery of Schiller as a subject for his art. In 1910, he began to write his great novel about Schiller, which appeared at first in four parts, but has now been republished in two volumes. In this work Molo reveals not only Schiller as he sees him, but also himself, his own artistic nature, and in part at least, his cosmic views. True, his Schiller is perhaps somewhat one-sided; the impatient, spasmodic character of his genius is perhaps too strongly emphasized. But on the whole Molo's Schiller is more human, more impressive than any of his predecessors' portrayals of that great poet.

From Schiller's heroic proportions it was but a step to Frederick the Great. But it was not mere Carlylian hero-worship that drew Molo to Fredericus; nor was it, as had been the case with not a few fine intellects, exultation over the greatness of that unique genius. Rather, he was attracted by the fact, patent to him, that Fredericus was the true symbol of the German people of his time. Molo drew not the *king* but the *head* of a people. Perceiving this close relation of Fredericus to his people, he was inspired with the idea of writing his trilogy "Ein Volk wacht auf" (a people awakens).

In this trilogy "Fredericus" is the first work, and represents the first stage of the awakening. Here the people are not yet free; they submit to an absolutistic rule because the ruler is a monarchistic genius. "Louise" shows the second stage, during which the existing regime begins to lose touch with the people, who are becoming conscious of their soul. In "Ein Volk wacht auf," we have the third stage, in which the people awake, and shake off the fetters which bind them to the France of Napoleon and to their own outworn regime. At this point German democracy takes up the German war of liberation.

Each of these three novels is of an exquisite beauty. The character of Fredericus is drawn on monumental lines, with one bold sweep of consummate artistry. Richard Dehmel rightly called the work entrancing. In "Louise" the character of that extraordinary Prussian queen is brilliantly executed. One sees her as she is developing along with her people, the latter being represented in the figures of Stein and Hardenberg, their true leaders. In the third volume, "Ein Volk wacht auf," the people have at last found themselves, have made good, and proved themselves worthy of their great leaders, because the leaders are of the

people, part and parcel of their own life. Indeed, this third volume of the trilogy is a song of the revolution of the whole German people, as beautiful, as powerful as Coster's glorification of the Flemings in "Tyll Ulen-spiegel," which was also a true book of the people. So far, this trilogy has been Molo's greatest and largest work.

Two volumes of sketches and short stories deserve mention: "Im Schritt der Jahrhunderte" (marching with the centuries), a collection of historical pictures published in 1918; and "Im Zwielicht der Zeit" (in the twilight of our times), published in 1922. In both of these books one finds excellent studies for his great novels; fascinating, affecting characters; and situations full of bitter truth and rollicking humour.

Molo has also tried his hand at the drama, and to good purpose. Here, too, his dramatic style is unmistakable. The qualities that gained him renown as a novelist, are present in the same measure in his dramatic work. Here is none of the "psychology" of a Schnitzler; no expressionistic groping after the manner of a Kaiser or an Unruh; nothing but the essential; nothing beyond what is absolutely necessary to ensure the desired effect. Everything is clearly observed, condensed, and sharply drawn; and with all this, his plays show a high poetic fancy, they are replete with positive, forceful thoughts. The best of his dramas is "Till Lausebums," a kind of romantic humoresque, a small-town comedy, with an architect, dubbed "Hamlet's brother," as its central figure. It were fitter to name him the laughing brother of Ibsen's "An Enemy of the People." The author says about this comedy: "Till Lausebums taught me to laugh once more; may he do as much for others."

F. SCHÖNEMANN.

(Translated by Joseph Dick.)

#### ÆSCHYLUS AND PAUL.

A PRELIMINARY shudder, as we learn from the critics of antiquity, ran around the whole theatre at Athens when, during the first performance of the "Furies" of Æschylus, a swift change of scene disclosed the interior of the temple of Apollo at Delphi—a preliminary shudder that was destined to attain its climax in a general panic.

Orestes, that hapless son of Clytemnestra who slew his guilty mother, was observed kneeling in the posture of a suppliant at the great altar of the god of song and music. This divinity—Apollo himself—with the bow slung over his shoulder, emerged from the inner shrine, closely attended by that Hermes who served him as herald and as messenger. Together the Olympian brethren crossed the scene from which the priestess had just fled with more of those piercing shrieks to which ancient Athenian audiences ought long since to have been hardened, one might think.

The agitation of the priestess, like that of the vast audience assembled for the initial performance of this immortal play, was occasioned by the spectacle of the fifty slumbering and snoring Furies. The nightmare by which the forms and faces of the weird sisters were so obviously torn, the beaked noses that thrust themselves towards heaven while the creatures sprawled upon their backs or rolled writhing from side to side until they seemed a field of swaying cacti, the sombre black of their rustling robes, the talons that served them as claws—all realized to the eye of every Athenian there and then the poetical superstition that these Furies were fresh from hell.

They had come up to earth to rend the murderer of his mother. Their lightest movement was a menace to Orestes even while they slept from sheer exhaustion, the consequence of their long pursuit of him over sea and

city. This frantic youth, himself exhausted and silent as he mutely embraced the horn of the great altar, seemed like a man on a raft in a storm.

Apollo cast one look of horror at the slumbering monsters and listened for a moment in stupefaction to the chorus of their snores. The bright god had come to favour Orestes, yet Apollo himself was staggered. The sleep of the Furies was, nevertheless,<sup>1</sup> a contrivance of his own. Hideous in their virginity, these sisters, he explained to the suppliant upon the altar, were doomed to dwell for ever in aloofness from the kiss of any man, and never were to know maternity. Nor would they long be slumbering where they lay. Orestes must take advantage of the stupor of these sisters. He could escape their vengeance only by flight.

There seems to have ensued a universal sigh of relief among the audience at his going. The first mood of real panic in the theatre was assuaged. It was overwhelming, from all accounts, only at the moment of the arrival of the ghost of Clytemnestra herself. The confusion that now ensued among the audience calls for no elucidation to those who really know the epistles of Paul at first hand rather than through the commentaries of the pulpit Dryasdusts. These Athenians who were thus so overwhelmed by the spectacle of the hissing Furies, these Greeks of the age of Pericles and of Socrates, were what the modern man calls spiritualists; even if their spiritualism did assume forms abhorrent to the great Apostle. Spiritualism was to all of ancient Greece the one true faith, for that is what the mythology amounts to. Socrates himself was ever proclaiming the dire warnings he received from the demon that attended him.

A persistent failure of the reverend Dryasdusts, in and out of their pulpits, to appreciate the implications of this spiritualism accounts for the inadequacy of their professorial elucidations of the significance for ourselves of these Æschylean Furies. Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, had enlisted in a campaign against all such furies and all such demons, a campaign destined to enrich mankind with those terrific epistles. He warned his Corinthian converts to hold aloof even from offerings to their idols, their effigies, not to touch the food left for them at the shrines or eaten in their name.

It follows that the ineptitude of tutorial efforts to rationalize Greek mythology actually goes on in flat defiance of the teaching of Paul; and the Apostle to the Gentiles was one of the great Greek scholars of his time. Paul did not think that behind every myth of classical antiquity lurked an effort to explain a phenomenon of nature. That is but the Dryasdust formula—an imbecility not without its stifling implications for young men and women who must get their idea of the Æschylean Furies from pedants rather than from Paul. To the pedants, the Furies are to be taken seriously only as literature; whereas to Paul, they are to be taken seriously as demons against the propitiation of which he thundered in many epistles to both Romans and Corinthians. What would we not give for the recovery of that lost epistle in which Paul seems actually to have gone the length of warning his converts against any kind of intercourse with the pagan!

Not that Paul could make no allowance for the æsthetic quality of the spiritualism of the Greeks. He actually referred to their poets with respect. He professed himself debtor to the Greeks. He knew their mythology well. He must many a time have heard that ever since her taking off by the hand of her son, the wife of Agamemnon brooded in hell, where the Furies, too, rested in their shadows. Well must Paul have understood the function of the Furies; and it is inconceivable that he never witnessed a performance of the Æschylean tragedy. He was

versed in the superstitions he attacked. There are moments when he seems to be making a mockery of the Æschylean Furies themselves.

Theirs was the task of destroying the peace of mind of him upon whom a mother's curse had rested. They were the personification of such curses as were breathed by Clytemnestra in the blackness of Erebus upon him whose hand had torn her from the world she so enjoyed. Stung by her taunts, the weird sisters had risen to earth; and from that moment the maddened Orestes knew no peace. He spent his days in flight and his nights in supplication at a shrine of the kind Paul loathed; the kind, perhaps, from which Paul shrank when he told the Lystraens that God is one—not many.

Paul, we must remember, admitted the existence of these demons, these fiends, these Furies, as did James; even if neither of those Apostles identified them with the perverseness of Æschylus. The Corinthians, among whom in Paul's day the Greek theatre flourished as it could have flourished before only in Athens itself, did not understand the attitude of Paul towards these creatures in the realms below. We do not know that he assumed the ghost of a murdered Clytemnestra to be capable of rising from any hell to sting any Furies into any horrid race; but we are permitted to see how he regarded any propitiation of such a tribe of devils in the Æschylean style. Æschylean tragedy was enacted at Corinth, and its people knew the "Furies" well. How dark to Paul must have seemed the mind that accepted, as the only rulers of this world, those gods who gave no ear to Clytemnestra, and who drove her to her bargain with the Furies! How often in the darkness of her nights on earth had Clytemnestra not listened to the forked tongues of the Furies as they lapped up the brew she made for their propitiation!

Such were the spiritual realities of that pagan world against which Paul was in arms. Hence the Apostle may have seen the Furies move and stir in the theatre, first one of the band and then another, until every Fury was spitting and shrieking. Implacable, he must have been told by his Corinthians, were these daughters of night and earth, conceived in the drops of blood that fell from the body of Uranus. No prayer, no sacrifice, could move them or protect the objects of their persecution. One must appeal from them to Apollo. They were part and parcel of the great spiritual terror that must be propitiated at Corinth in the Æschylean manner; for these Furies, with their snaky hair, were more ancient than Zeus himself, father of gods and men. Even before his birth, they were brooding in the depths of their black hell. Thus ran the pleadings of those primitive Christians who lapsed, whenever they fell back into their paganism; and if Paul himself did not hear such excuses from the brethren, he must have been made impatient by many like them.

This, then, was the pagan faith calling for those forms of propitiation against which the Apostle was so stirred in the course of his missionary journeys. He must have cherished a suspicion that the theatre at Corinth was an enemy of the one God. No woman in the great audience that assembled at Athens to witness the first performance of the "Furies" was ignorant of the lore that rendered the curses of these creatures so dire, and the Corinthians of the time of Paul took the Furies no less seriously than had the Athenians so long before.

It was indeed the faith inspiring these sacrifices to idols that evoked in part the epistles to the Corinthians. They seem to echo at times with the sepulchral curses heaped upon the prostrate sisters, all writhing in the throes of their nightmares, all groaning as they heard even in their dream the complaint of Clytemnestra. They and their kind were the terror of the Corinthians. The city

worship was little more than a propitiation of such fiends, unless it took the form of an open licentiousness of which Paul writes now and then with startling candour.

We may better comprehend the tone of his reference to the pagan superstitions from the circumstance that the starting of these sister Furies from their sleep in the theatre nearly always brought an ancient audience to the point of panic. The sway of the pagan priests was one of terror, and shrieks and swoons failed to relieve the emotional crises in the bosoms of women expecting to become mothers and of children at the play for the first time in their lives.

The first chorus of the Furies was sure to terminate in wild disorder. The gum that dropped from their eyes, the serpents that twined in their hair, the croakings that emphasized their curses, combined in an effect never otherwise witnessed upon any scene and only faintly realized centuries later in the weird sisters of Macbeth. That misconception of the theatre in the ancient world which is scarcely less egregious in the modern mind than its misconception of Christianity in the ancient world, makes it difficult to bring home the truth that if the "classics" were what they seem to be in the expositions of the commentators, Paul would not have found his Corinthians so difficult to wean from their demons, their furies and their hells. The theatre in Paul's time had become a vested interest at Corinth, like the images at Ephesus, whereas no form of Christianity was yet a vested interest anywhere.

Paul coped with an even greater difficulty. To the Christian of our time it seems fairly rational to assume that God is one, not many, as James declares, and that the very demons, as James declares again, knew this. But the truth that God is one seemed anything but obvious in the world to which Paul preached. A theory of "gods many" seemed plausible then, and the Æschylean masterpiece had its plausibility for the Corinthians as well as for the Romans and the Athenians. Orestes had become to all the object of an æsthetic pleasure in the propitiation of the Furies. Pagan piety, when Paul made his first appeal to the Gentiles, was but a passion for propitiation.

There can be no doubt that, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul is attacking this entire demonology even when he gives his adhesion to the idea that beings of the kind described in Æschylean tragedy do exist. The pagan divinities were conceived by Paul to be evil spirits, devils in the worst sense. It was to afford us our means of rescue from the clutches of these fiends, and from their law of sin and death, that the redeeming Christ had become the son of man and risen from the dead.

In place of this paganism of fear, Paul was preaching a religion of love. It was a tremendous paradox to the pagan mind; a paradox that proved baffling not to the Corinthians only but to the Romans, when Paul wrote them that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God. This, in a moral atmosphere breathed by Æschylean Furies, was all so new, so strange!

ALEXANDER HARVEY.

#### ORPHEUS WITH HIS LUTE.

Ha ha! Ha ha! this world doth pass  
Most merrily, I'll be sworn;  
For many an honest Indian ass  
Goes for an Unicorn.  
Farra didde dino;  
This is idle fino.

I AM thinking of a magazine-editor's face, and what it would express after he had read this stanza, contributed,

perhaps, by an irresistibly famous poet. I am thinking of what the critics would say if it were printed. Farradiddle dino; this is idle fino! Hey nonino! With a fala la la la! It is almost embarrassing in its perfect unself-consciousness, like a nude child appearing suddenly in the midst of a bridge-party. It has nothing to do with poetry as we know poetry: no emotion, experience, philosophy, or visualization. It is mere sound without sense or feeling. Reading it aloud, we stumble over it, feel foolish; then, with a sudden burst of historical enthusiasm, sing-song it off with simulated gaiety. The attempt fails miserably. The refrains come from our lips as cold as they look on paper.

Yet to one who has heard these rigmaroles in their own setting—the half-careless, half-wistful old tunes that modulate from major to minor and back again—to one who can hear them, not see them, they become part of a beauty as familiar and as elusive as remembered spring. For theirs is the sort of magic we no longer seek or require; theirs is the spontaneous shout of a sensation which expresses itself unwittingly, not in poetry or in music but in both at once. Theirs is none of that grave "emotion recollected in tranquillity," conscious formula of the conscious artist; only a heap of spilled syllables which any child would recognize as a happy sound and any grown-up as mere silliness.

The lute is stilled. But once its strumming notes were so much a part of the lyric impulse that thought gave way before the gush of music, and words themselves surrendered their shapes to conform to the melody, half heard, that hinted its rhythms in the poet's mind. Or else the poet was musician as well, like Thomas Campion, pouring out melody and lyric together, perhaps hardly aware whether he was speaking or singing. The perfect marriage of syllable and tune; that was the secret, a secret we have forgotten who view these widowed words exposed in the pompous morgue of print.

But here is nothing to mourn over, no loss to retrieve, no loveliness capable of revival. The complete change in our methods and criteria has rendered extinction of the true lyric so inevitable that mourning would be blatant and futile sentimentality. And "revival" in the concert hall is barbarous. Under the hard glare of electric lights, a superior person advances to the front of the stage, determined to be Elizabethan or die in the attempt. Perhaps she even wears a ruff. An historian rather than a musician plucks an archaic instrument which arouses much curiosity but little sound. Then the singer, ever so sprightly, ever so naive, bounces, as it were, over the unmeaning syllables she has rehearsed, contorting her face into a crescent leer, and leaning forward to take the audience into her confidence, even shaking a waggish finger at them to announce the climax of the song. The hearers snort with enthusiastic culture, their stony faces set as for a funeral. Poor Phyllis! Poor Corydon! In all your Restoration decay, you never suffered like this.

The psychological critics say that we have changed from ear-mindedness to eye-mindedness. Loathsome words, these, but the idea they express is true. Poetry and music have parted company; they have become specialized arts, ever farther apart—flirting with the pictorial method indeed. After visualization of images was set up and worshipped as the guiding spirit of good poetry, the younger and more ardent bards went even farther and invoked typography itself to give aid. The shapes of lines in print (foreseen, perhaps, in the cross-shaped and pillar-shaped stanzas of the Cavaliers); the manipulation of dots, dashes, and asterisks; all these tricks have been enlisted in the service of verse. In fact, we already envisage the time when a printer's strike will do away with poetry. Perhaps that is just as well.

Whatever happens, we may be sure that the spontaneous song-lyric will never come back. All the divine gibberish of the lute-stanzas has become nonsensical gibberish; and, as I have observed, the fact is so inevitable that we may as well spare our regret for less hopeless situations. Occasionally, some miracle may come to pass, and two or three may share my good fortune of some years ago, when I heard a voice out of the lost years in unimpaired richness.

A clear, starry night in August, I sat on a clump of grass that still gave off the stored heat of noon, and leaned my back against a cedar tree. Before me stretched miles of glimmering pasture-land broken by dark groups of gossiping trees and the lumpy shapes of sleeping cattle. Throwing away my cigarette, I breathed in the far more powerful sedative of new-cut hay and damp leaves. Suddenly, then, there came a voice across the fields, a girl's voice, utterly unconscious that anywhere in the world there were ears to listen. I heard poetry, for the first and only time. She sang on for about half an hour; I remember still brief fragments of some of the tunes, "It was a lover and his lass," "The cuckoo is a pretty bird," "O the month of May, the merry month of May, so frolic, so gay, and so green, so green, so green," "Weep you no more, sad fountains." Sometimes she seemed near, sometimes far away, but that was a trick of the wind toying with her music. Another world rushed eagerly into being under the strong, sweet August night; some door opened that had never opened before and will probably never open again. I learned then that poetry itself is not of the printed page or the meaning of words or the melody even, but of the one moment when life becomes articulate in all its voices to a single hearer. The only use of the printed page is to bring about this miracle, as the abracadabra of a wizard unlocks the sky. That night I saw nothing; I only heard, but heard with an intensity and understanding stronger than all the combined power of the five senses, strong enough to compensate for that eternity of nothingness which the cynics promise. And thus it came and thus it went, suddenly, mysteriously. The poems had been re-created as though no one in the world had known poetry before.

The singer? She may have been my despised concert lady, released from artificiality by vacation and August starlight. She may have been a chorister sent by my Incomparable Queen to reward the devotion of her latter-day subject. Hey nonino! It isn't the singer who matters. It is the song that endures.

ROBERT HILLYER.

## LETTERS FROM ABROAD.

### THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH—

SIRS: The masses are pitiful puppets in our industrial civilization. They toil, while others profit; and only occasionally, when the machinery breaks down, do they realize what is being done to them. Upon command, with robot-like devotion, they plunge headlong into industrial activity; they lay down their tools when one greed-god is at war with another; and even suffer the privations of famine in order that their master may win his struggle against another exploiter. This is indicative of what is going on in Germany to-day; and only the Communist newspaper, the *Red Flag*, blazons the fact in every issue. Perhaps, in time, patriotism will be re-defined in Germany; but until then, the people are enveloped in an atmosphere of dogged, watchful waiting and determined passive resistance that is a magnificent exhibition of the power of the people when they are united by a common impulse.

The wrenching of the population from its accustomed

habits of living is the first definite step away from the ordered existence of several past generations. It has brought with it the necessity for a new valuation of the importance of the State, the place of industry in the commonwealth, and the relation of the individual to industry and to the State. These social, political and industrial revaluations demand before all else a metamorphosis in the mental attitude of the people; and the psychological effort involved causes more grief and lamentation than the material change itself.

The German people, because of their steadfast, orderly nature, have built up a society organized down to the most minute details. The war has broken it up, and now they are in the quandary of having to meet an entirely new set of circumstances while their affections cling to customs that once sufficed to make life an easy and a pleasant journey. They never had to think of the morrow; their lives, and their children's lives, and those of their grandchildren could have been plotted on a curve. Now, each day must answer for itself. Although malnutrition, inadequate heating- and housing-facilities, and other energy-depleting concomitants of war-in-peace-times are common, the fact that is hardest to bear is the inescapable one of change.

The love of the habitual, the clinging to the tried and the known, the bitterness at having to simplify the business of mere existence, intensely aggravates Germany's sorrows over her material losses. These would be easier to bear were the German people less inflexible mentally. As a petty example of this inflexibility in practice, I recall a *Hausfrau* who lamented over the fact that she could no longer afford to give her washing to the laundry, and hence did not know what to do. Her husband had no advice to offer. I suggested soaking it in the bathtub over night and then pasting the handkerchiefs and other flat wash on her large, warm, white tiled stoves to dry.

"But no one has ever done that before," she protested with a rather hopeless air.

Then I told her of the uses to which window panes are put in New York rooming-houses. Well, if they do that in America, she would imitate the practical Americans. Since then, I have heard that the laundry-question has been solved for at least a dozen Berlin households.

Yet this very inflexibility in meeting new conditions and in ordering their lives to meet new situations will, I believe, save Germany from a bloody revolution. Revolution there will be; but it will be a transformation from the old order to the new without a sudden disruption of the organization without which Germany does not seem able to exist. Red tape, inequality, officialism are still in evidence; but the railway-service is nearly as efficient as that of France, though trains are not so numerous. The conduct of business is practically unchanged, save that merchants everywhere now fix their prices in dollar-equivalents, and try to lay up a reserve fund of stable foreign money. At present, the price of goods has, in a great many instances, reached a parity with the world-market price, and in some instances, has gone beyond it.

Those who have had the flexibility of mind to meet the speculative fever that is in the air in Germany today have grown suddenly wealthy. On the Kurfürstendamm, the upper Broadway of Berlin, one sees a veritable parade of costly finery; while in the Wedding district, comparable to Ninth Avenue in New York, rags and patches cover skeleton figures. The very rich are growing richer, the poor, poorer; but neither of these classes is composed of the same type of people that made up its numbers before the war. Speculation in stocks has made the gambling business man a trillionaire in marks many times over; while the small householder has seen

his savings of a lifetime dwindle from ten thousand dollars to about two dollars. He is *the poor*.

In the old sense of the term, there is no middle class in Germany to-day. But between the rich merchant and speculator, and the poor worker by the day, the seamstress, the teacher of piano, the unorganized and casual workman, the university-instructor and members of other professions, is the vast, organized class of skilled workers, mostly Social Democrats. Their wages permit, at least, the necessities of existence. Gradually they are forming the solid bulk of an intelligent, bourgeois workingman's republic. . .

This class, numerically the most important in Germany to-day, has taken over the *Weltanschauung* of the former middle class. Its members have no animosity against the class of small landlords they have replaced, for the life of the small landowner or householder is also their ideal of the good life. If one approaches a German workman with the notion that he is, as a member of the producing class, opposed to the small landowner who lives on his income, one soon discovers that his sympathies are all with the latter. The small landowner's or householder's property represents his savings, the income from which is to-day practically nothing, as rents are regulated by law and are infinitesimal when compared with the prices of other necessities. This class has been legally discriminated against, made utterly destitute; and, as its members consist of old or elderly men and women, they are in a pitiable condition.

Alone among the various political and social units in Germany to-day, the communist seems to understand his relation to his environment. Though the communists in Germany are comparatively weak numerically, they are excellently organized. Their newspapers expose the secret deals of the international industrialists. In fact, the avarice of the big industrial combinations is becoming so flagrant that it is no longer secret. The meetings, the demonstrations, the educative campaigns of the communists are not often disturbed, and I believe that their power will grow. They are German, though scarcely 100 per cent, and not deportable; and their brethren of different political persuasions are not convinced that life is perfect. It is only a question of time, I believe, before the greed of the industrial magnates will be their own undoing, and Germany goes Red. Even the Social Democrats, who still flare up with the old patriotism at every new aggression of the French, have lost their belief in the patriotism of their industrial overlords. There are murmurings within the ranks, as there are howls from the left. But that constitutional inertia, that fear and hatred of change, keeps them still in the same plodding stride. Nevertheless, radical change there must be; and the sooner it comes, the sooner will Germany be able to set her house in order. I am, etc.,  
Berlin.

JEROME LACHENBRUCH.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS.

### MILTON'S LIGHTER MOMENTS.

SIRS: Mr. J. William Hebel's essay on "Milton's Lighter Moments," in the *Freeman* of 28 March, will be salutary reading for all those who have been brought up on the traditional view of the author of "Paradise Lost." Mr. Hebel, however, is not the first to call this view into question; and it is clear from various expressions in his paper that even he has not succeeded in ridding himself entirely of the idea that the conception of life expressed in "Paradise Lost" was essentially that of a Puritan theologian. It is impossible in a brief letter to argue the question in detail, and besides this has already been done by others far more competent than I can pretend to be. I may refer especially to the very penetrating and suggestive study of Milton's

philosophy, "La Pensée de Milton," recently published by M. Denis Saurat of the University of Bordeaux (Paris, Alcan, 1920). In this work—a doctor's thesis of the best French type—and in several shorter discussions by the same writer, especially one entitled "Blake and Milton" (Paris, Alcan, 1920), the reader will find an exceedingly interesting and at times even startling interpretation of Milton's thought, the conclusions of which are altogether at variance with the notion that "Paradise Lost" was in any real sense a Puritan epic. To Mr. Hebel I venture to commend in particular the pages in which M. Saurat analyses Milton's conception of sex ("Pensée de Milton," Part II, Chap. III), and shows it to be the natural outgrowth of the temperament and experiences revealed in such earlier writings as Mr. Hebel dwells upon in his article: I am, etc.,

Evanston, Illinois.

R. S. CRANE.

#### HINDU INFLUENCE IN CAMBODIA.

SIRS: Referring to Miss Florence Gilliam's reply to my letter, published in your issue of 4 April, I hasten to say that I neither wrote nor implied that Cambodian dancing was merely Hindu dancing transplanted to Cambodia. What I meant was that it has been influenced a great deal by the Hindu art and ideals of dancing. Miss Gilliam refers to some writers on the subject, who have either upheld or written against my view. But the fact that can not be denied is that all Buddhistic countries bordering on India—Burma, Cambodia, Annam, Cochin China, Tonkin, Siam, and Tibet—have been considerably influenced by India not only in religion, but in their mythologies, arts, sciences, and philosophies.

The very name of the country under discussion—Cambodia—is of Hindu origin. And what does Angkor Vat show? The influence of Hindu architecture and mythology. Do not the Cambodians, the Siamese, and their neighbours still bear many Hindu names? Do they not wear some Hindu articles of dress? Are not the adventures of Rama, Sita, and other Hindu heroes and heroines known and still recited in some of these countries? How then, can Hindu influence be said to have disappeared from them? Of course, no one would dream of denying that these peoples modified whatever they learned from either the Hindus or the Chinese to suit their own special temperaments, or that they had evolved many of the details of their arts and civilization independently of the two ancient fountain-heads of Oriental civilization, namely: India and China.

Finally I might say that the Taj Mahal is a purely Indo-Saracenic building—that is, that it is constructed and decorated on Hindu and Saracenic principles. The theory that was advanced about half a century ago (on insufficient grounds) by some European writers, that its origin was due to an Italian architect, has been discredited for about a generation now. I am etc.,

New York City.

V. B. METTA.

#### GEORGE DOUGLAS.

SIRS: A number of errors in fact and a few omissions serve to detract from Mr. Edwin Muir's brilliant estimate of the author of "The House with the Green Shutters" in your issue of 1 April.

"George Douglas" was the pseudonym of George Douglas Brown who was born at Ocheltree, in Ayrshire, on 26 January, 1869. Brown, or Douglas, as Mr. Muir has it, died in London on 28 August, 1902—thirty-three years of age, a good deal over the twenty that Mr. Muir mentions.

"The House with the Green Shutters" was published in 1901, and in this country seems to have had a certain degree of popularity. The copy I own is of the ninth impression published by McClure Phillips and Co., New York, 1902.

May I quote from a brief study of Brown by W. M. Parker in his "Modern Scottish Writers" (1917)? Brown is described as the "Herald of Revolt" in this work which informs us that his education was continued until he was twenty-six:

"Brown remained after his birth at Ocheltree for four years, and from there he proceeded, in the company of his

mother . . . to Duchraj in the parish of Cozton, thence to Cronberry, and the final years with his mother were spent at Crofthead, near Ayr. After eight years at Cozton Parish School, Brown passed on first to Mr. Hyslop at Cronberry, and thence to Mr. Andrew at Ocheltree and finally to Ayr Academy where he finished his commendable school career. From 1887 till 1891 he attended Glasgow University where he gained the Eglinton Fellowship in 1890 and the Snell Exhibition Scholarship in 1891. Then he proceeded to Balliol College, Oxford, where he won first-class honours in "Mods," the intermediate examination. A brilliant scholarly career was in prospect for him, but the serious illness that had befallen his mother arrested his progress; and with filial love and devotion, and, at the same time with indomitable cheerfulness in submitting to the inevitable, he returned to his mother's bedside, when she died in 1895."

After her death, Parker says, Brown went to London, became a hack journalist and wrote the magnificent "House with the Green Shutters." The work, therefore, seems to have been that not of a precocious youngster "not much over twenty" but of a rapidly blossoming maturity. I am, etc., Valhalla, New York.

ABE FRIEDMAN.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF IBSEN.

SIRS: In a letter printed in the *Freeman* of 28 March, Mr. Pierre Loving, commenting upon a recent essay by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, deplores the lack of ease in most of the dialogue written by American dramatists. This seems to me a fair hit; but, unlike Mr. Loving, I do not trace the fault so much to Sardou and Scribe as I do to the influence of Henrik Ibsen.

The majority of our embryo authors still consider Ibsen's plays to be the last word in technical construction, and their form the most manageable and pliant. At least professors of the drama and suchlike, whatever they style themselves, place more stress upon the study of Ibsen than they do upon the study of any other master. It is only when one realizes that Ibsen's method was entirely peculiar to himself that this fact seems quite strange. Ibsen evoked most of his drama from the past. Often the first and second acts of his plays are given over almost entirely to exposition, and he is forced to depend upon long, unnatural duologues where the right word in the right place is essential to the understanding. No other modern playwright uses this method so habitually as the great Norwegian.

Why, then, should the young student devote so much time to the study of Ibsen when there are better models for him at hand? Great men have lived since Ibsen. To my mind Granville Barker, Gorky, Porto-Riche, and Chekhov are more advanced craftsmen than he. Chekhov never had the slightest difficulty in expressing whatever he had to say, and his dialogue is certainly as plastic as any that has ever been written. Frequently he allows his characters to think out loud, and these monologues are written with such ease and fluency that nature is not in the least offended. To me his plays seem to be the highest point of realism.

Porto-Riche's manner is similar to Chekhov's. His psychology, however, is more obvious, and usually his people wear a cloak of sophisticated French frankness that allows them to say whatever comes into their heads. Yet his plays are fine examples of the realistic school.

Gorky is best known as the author of his masterpiece "The Lower Depths," but he has also written two or three other wonderful plays, notably "The Smug Citizen" and "Children of the Sun." Granville Barker has written two of the best comedies in the English language; and both of these plays are as ably constructed as any I have ever seen, excepting, of course, Chekhov's. Incidentally, Mr. Barker probably knows more about the ins and outs of the theatre than any man living.

To come to the point, I believe that a latter-day school of realism has actually grown up "since Ibsen," and that aspiring young playwrights will gain more by devoting more time to the study of the men of this school than they will by imitating old masters and by experimenting with new forms. I am, etc.,

New York City.

CONRAD DUNBAR.

## BOOKS.

### ON THE STONES OF THE ROAD.

A people is like man. When he has disappeared, nothing is left of him unless he has taken the precaution to leave his imprint on the stones of the road.

It is possible to write the history of mankind in many ways. One can assemble together the confused and contradictory data concerning man's endlessly repeated attempts to create stable forms of external government, and show, more or less partially, how all these have failed. This is the method practised long ago by Gibbon in his history of Rome, and recently by a writer who possessed neither Gibbon's philosophic irony, nor his epic breadth of vision, nor his aristocratic instinct for the significant—Mr. H. G. Wells. Or one can write history from the standpoint of pure social or economic theory. I have myself read works of this nature. They unfortunately bear about as much relation to humanity which loves, suffers, and is disillusioned, as a theorem in geometry bears to a banquet. Or one can attempt to write history from the standpoint of some universal law, as Henry Adams did; and in this respect the historian becomes as much the plotter of futurity as the recorder of the past.

Elie Faure's<sup>1</sup> method of writing history is akin to none of these. He is less concerned, happily, with the empirical theories by which science attempts to define reality, than with the patient attempt to understand that which has already come about. Mankind has lived upon the earth now for many thousands of years. It has passed through centuries of enthusiastic structural faith and centuries of disillusion and decay. What remains behind are utensils of daily life, carved and polished stones, pictures drawn upon walls, temples, tombs, and here and there some fragment of the universal aspiration frozen into the form of organized language or organized tone. These are the only records of what man has sought, what he has needed, what he has dreamed concerning his destiny. They are his creations, his attempts to arrest the universal flux of things, and to stamp upon them the image which his aspiration holds at some particular moment. There is, of course, no finality, no logical law which can ever enable us to say which of the many works of art that man, in his desire to perpetuate his most significant moments of vitality, has created, are the most important. But as Faure says in his introduction, that is of no immediate significance. What is significant is not to know that Michelangelo might have despised Egyptian sculpture, or that Phidias would have burnt Rembrandt if he had known of him. It is significant for us to know that each one of us is in turn Egypt, Michelangelo, Phidias and Rembrandt—that all these sides of the unknown reality which art has attempted to body forth, are contained in us to-day, for the reason that they have been expressed by humanity.

But Faure's history is far more than a mere compilation of facts and dates concerning particular art-periods and particular artists. He has written, as he says, a sort of epic poem of artistic achievements, or, if you prefer to call it so, an autobiography of man's attempts to transmute and re-create in permanent form the world that he sees within and without himself. It is impossible to read many pages of this book without realizing that something in the author's own character and life-experience has given him a profound sympathy with the obscure and overwhelming aspira-

tion towards life which every human being carries about within him. The solution of this sympathy is to be found in the fact that Faure is a physician, a social agitator, and a self-cultivated man. Moreover, he is himself the descendant of two contrasting racial stocks: one Protestant, positive, scientific (he springs from the same Huguenot stock that produced Elisée Reclus, the famous French geographer and anarchist), and the other Catholic, tender and mystical. Thus he is always attracted outwardly by the beauty of objective fact; inwardly by the necessity of giving that fact some emotional, mystical interpretation. In another of his books, "Le Danse sur le Feu et l'Eau," which I hope some day to see translated into English, he describes the artist as one who is continually striving to maintain a balance between knowledge and desire. That balance is in Faure himself. He has written the history of art as an artist.

In the two volumes now published of this English translation, Faure traces the history of art from its beginnings to the close of the Middle Ages. In the first volume, he takes us first to the epoch before history in order to show us how the art of that period, from the "Venus of Willendorf" to the bison-frescoes of Altamira, sprang from the daily needs of the men of that time, and how it disappeared, to be replaced by the sombre tomb- and temple-architecture of the menhir and dolmen when the first groping religious faiths had discovered the continuity of the soul. Then he takes us to Egypt, sitting immobile, staring from out its living tomb into futurity for twenty centuries; probably, as he points out, the most perfect civilization in itself which man has produced, from which all the rest have been but deviations, and the "whole of it contained in the sigh which the colossus of Memnon exhales before sunrise." After a slight excursion to the ancient East, we get upon classic soil; we come to Ancient Greece and Rome.

These chapters contain the kernel of Faure's contribution to the metaphysics of art-creation. Consider this passage, for example, on Phidias:

Philosophic sculpture is born of liberty and dies because of it. The slave in Assyria could describe vividly that which he was permitted to see; in Egypt, he could give a definition of form as firm as the discipline which bowed him down, as full of nuances and as moving as the faith that sustained him. The free man alone gives life to the law, lends to science the life of his emotion, and sees that in his own mind we reach the crest of that continuing wave which attaches us to things in their entirety—until the day when science kills his emotion.

The artist of to-day is afraid of words, when he does not fall a victim to them. He is right to refrain from listening to the professional philosopher and especially to refrain from following him. He is wrong to be afraid of passing for a philosopher. Also if we have no right to forget that Phidias followed the discourses of Anaxagoras, we recognize that he might without loss, have been ignorant of metaphysics. He looked upon life with simplicity, but what he could see of it developed in him so lucid a comprehension of the relationships which, for the artist, make up its unity and continuity, that minds skilful in generalizing could extract from his work the elements out of which the modern world has come. Phidias formed Socrates (it must be recalled that Socrates worked as a sculptor) and also Plato—unknown to themselves, doubtless—when he materialized for them in the clearest, the most veracious, and the most human of languages, the mysterious affinities which give life to ideas.

It is obvious that we have here a theory which accounts for the regular alternation of creative and non-creative epochs in art-history. The moment, according to Faure, when the individual becomes sufficiently free of the social structure to pursue art

<sup>1</sup> "History of Art." Elie Faure. Translated by Walter Pach. Vol. I. Ancient Art. Vol. II. Mediæval Art. New York: Harper & Brothers. \$7.50 per volume.

for its own sake, that moment he makes art subservient to his own philosophic speculations on life. These speculations, in return, affect art to the point of killing it by making it too cerebral, too formulated, too academic. Thus it happened with Greece, and with that other high period, the Renaissance. Egypt, too, might have known such a period of liberated creation resulting in decline, had the movement vaguely sketched out by Akhnaton pursued its course without reaction. In Greece, after the moment of time which stood between the temple-front of Olympia and Phidias, there was to be everywhere a decline.

The evolution of the great periods is approximately the same everywhere; but in Greece from the seventh to the third century, it appears with an astonishing relief. Man, when he realizes himself, proceeds like nature, from anarchy to unity, from unity to anarchy. At first the scattered elements have to seek one another in the darkness of the mind. Then the whole mass of the chaotic creature is weighed down by the soil, which clogs its joints and clings to its heavy steps. Then the forms disengage themselves and find their proper places and agreement: their logical relationships appear, and each organ adapts itself more and more closely to its function. In the end, the rhythm is broken, form seems to fly from form, the mind seems to wander at random, the contracts are lost, the power disintegrates. Thus there are in Greek art four definite epochs: the Primitives, Ægina, the Parthenon, the Mausoleum. First, the stammering analysis, followed in the archaic men by a brief and rough synthesis. Then, when the mind is mature, a new and short analysis, luminous and compelling, which ends, with a single bound, in the conscious synthesis of a society in equilibrium. Finally, a last research which is not to reach its goal, which is to dissipate itself more and more until it has reduced its fragments *ad infinitum*, has broken all the old bounds, and has, little by little, lost itself through lack of comprehension, fatigue, and the urgent need of a great, new power of feeling.

We may well question whether this analysis of Greek decline does not apply equally well to art at the present day; but let that pass. What is interesting to observe is that with the advent of Rome on the scene, the rhythm again changes. Rome was the first country so overweighted with an alien tradition that she never fully expressed herself, except in politics and in law. What she did give was a hard concreteness to the dawning Christian faith. It was Rome which held Christianity from disruption and which gave to it a form, logical and firm. Here the first volume of Faure's survey ends, and we approach the Middle Ages.

If, in the first volume of this survey, we feel here and there the effort to subject the undying rhythm of artistic development to a schematization too narrowly logical, the second gives us the full measure of Faure's genius for synthesis and his profound comprehension of the struggle out of which all art is born. In this volume he deals with Mediæval Art, and his definition of Mediæval Art is so vast that it takes in India, China, Japan, Mexico and Peru, Africa, Polynesia, Byzantium, Mohammedan art, Mediæval France and Italy. What he finds held in common by all of these contrasted aspirations is this: he finds in each case (with the exception of Africa and Polynesia which, through lack of organization, stand upon a lower level) that art was produced by anonymous workmen expressing their desire for a clear representation of concrete human needs as opposed to the lifeless dogmatism by which their lives were controlled. Or, to put the matter in another way, while the Middle Ages everywhere were oppressive in external theocratic government, in their creative inner

intensity, they voiced a long ecstatic cry for human liberation. "The Middle Ages re-created consciousness despite the gods they adored."

It is almost impossible to summarize the wealth of illustration by which this brilliant thesis is sustained. In India, for example, a pessimistic pantheism tending towards atheism was upheld by the Brahman caste. Nevertheless, beneath this yoke of negation, the stoneworkers sculptured the caves of Ellora, covered the rocks of Mahavellipore with figures, "disembowelled mountains to make them fruitful," carried their style and craft into Cambodia and Java. In China, again, there was the sharp division into castes, and a morality of frigid positivism—Confucianism—imposed from above upon the masses. Yet the people produced the exquisitely formed masterpieces of Tang and Sung. In Yucatan and Mexico there again existed feudal theocracy with a fixed dogma based upon torture, blood-thirst, human sacrifice. Yet that did not prevent the Maya workmen from putting up at Copan monuments combining Egyptian grandeur with Hindu exuberance of detail, or the later Aztecs from creating forms of monstrous barbaric terror. In France again, there was the dogma of a religion of pessimism and negation taught by a haughty priesthood who were supported in their position by oppressive feudal nobles. But again, there was reaction from below: the communes, Amiens, Sens, Rheims, Paris, asserted their elementary human freedom and put up in the course of two centuries the most wonderful structures ever yet built to enshrine the very gods in whose name they had been oppressed.

The chapter on Christianity and the commune is the summit of Faure's whole work. However familiar he may be with other epochs and countries, it is France he knows best; and he realizes profoundly that France has never surpassed her art-achievements of the thirteenth century. How did these achievements come about? Up to the late twelfth century the pervading architectural forms of France were the Romanesque Church and the feudal castle. The one is narrow, gloomy, built by clerics for clerics, the other oppressive, brutal: theological force supported by armed force. Then, when the crusades had to a slight extent shaken the power of the nobility, certain cities fortified themselves against clergy and nobles and declared themselves free. It was in these free communes that Gothic architecture was born, and the cathedrals were put up not to enshrine a dogma, but to be the meeting-place of the crowd, and to glorify its spirit. The French cathedral is not only, as Faure says, the epitome of the French spirit—the spirit of Montaigne as well as that of Hugo, of Rabelais as well as of Pascal—but it is also the greatest collective and communal poem ever created by man. What was attempted by unknown workmen in India, China, Yucatan, here assumes, under more favourable conditions, its final expression. It is a hymn in stone, built by humble and forgotten crowds to the god they had within their own hearts: the god who is in turn Jesus, Dionysus, Prometheus; the god who lives through excess of outward suffering and dies through excess of inner joy.

So far I have been attempting to follow the course of Faure's thought; but here I prefer to pause and ask the value of this thought for to-day. This "History of Art" is a great man's great contribution to the necessary understanding of ourselves which we must undertake if we are in any way to equal—I do not say improve on—the past. What is it that it tells us? What, essentially, is its message in a sentence? It tells us that the spirit in which a work is done, in

whatever period of art-creation, is more important than any temporary form which it takes. The Aztec sculptor carving a writhing mass of serpents, skulls, dismembered hands, is one in spirit with the workmen at Chartres carving the Virgin. Each is striving to embody in permanent form the god that is common to humanity as he knows it. Each is realizing that art is the most profoundly social and, because of its being social, also religious function of mankind. Each is performing his duty, as a unit in society, of recording the aspirations of the society about him in permanent form; and each is essentially anonymous.

This lesson, then, is obviously meant for us. We live in an epoch of exasperated individualism on the one hand, and of crude, confused, and purely industrial striving towards State-socialism on the other. It is this condition of chaos which we call civilization. But if a true civilization is to emerge, it must rest on the idea that every individual, not a few individuals only, is potentially an artist; and it must also rest not on vast agglomerations of capital (as do all our modern States) controlling trade and industry, but on industry and trade being free States in and for themselves. Or, to put it in another way, whatever gods we may worship, they must be gods common to all of us: and they must be worshipped with the liberated worship of the common spirit of united mankind, not with the forced worship of Mammon or of Mammon's laws. In his study of the spirit of the mediæval artist, Elie Faure has shown us the way to construct a civilization that only weariness and flagging energy can dissipate. It is for us in America to learn the lesson which he would teach us before we destroy our last and best opportunity of assuming the spiritual leadership of the world.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

#### A STUDY OF HOWELLS.

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS once declared that three-fifths of the classics are dead. Now that "The Rise of Silas Lapham" is accepted as safe literature in the cautious curriculum of our public schools, Howells himself is, ironically enough, by his own definition, a classic. Indeed, it is curious and sad that, whereas Howells's coetanean, Thomas Hardy, is still our contemporary, most of the novels by the American have the quaint flavour of old fashion-plates.

Mr. Cooke has written the finest study of Howells that I have yet seen.<sup>1</sup> Barring prolixities and an occasional inability to find his way out of a labyrinthine sentence, he writes with something of his subject's clarity and geniality—the *qualité maîtresse* of the novelist. Indeed, for his own sake, one wishes that he had less geniality and more acidity. He devotes half a chapter to Howells's poetry, which is well enough, except that most of the verse is abominable, and Mr. Cooke's critical intelligence deserves better pasture; and he can never quite give up any of the prose work as wholly weak. But his book has the merit of raising a fundamental issue. Was Howells a great realist?

Mr. Cooke believes that he was. He exhibits a Howells who grew up on literature, revolted against it, and then, as he says, abandoned all literary artifice in favour of "objectivity, detachment, self-obliteration." The general tenor of his discussion seems to show, on the contrary, that Howells, in reality, was a highly endowed "literary man" who insisted on denying his birthright. "The spirit of his work," writes Mr. Cooke, in a sentence that flashes more light on the matter than anything else, "is often the

spirit of literary criticism and only after that a criticism of life."

The result . . . is that, not content to record life as he sees it, he must needs record it as others, inclusively branded romanticists, do not see it. Most of the flaws are left by a talent that overleaps itself in an excess of zeal. The stupidity of his lovers, for example . . . is owing to no lack of passion on their part, but to an uncontrollable aversion on the part of their author to the notion of love at first sight.

This is hardly "objectivity, detachment, self-obliteration." It is tolerably plain indeed that in avoiding a literary attitude which was bad, Howells struck a consciously non-literary attitude which was worse. Consequently, it is difficult to follow Mr. Cooke in preferring Howells to Thackeray because of the former's "objectivity, detachment, self-obliteration." What difference is there between Thackeray, standing about in his novels with his hands in his pockets, and Howells whose characters "are excessively given to conversation on literary topics" by way of protesting that they are not in a novel at all, while all the time they know they are in a novel, and we know it, and so does Howells? As Professor Babbitt has shown, this sort of thing is simply a stock trait of romanticism.

Howells was not, then, a realist, but a Victorian who convinced himself that he was a realist. In the travel-books, which Mr. Cooke rightly praises as his most delightful work, and in the farces, in which he did not have to strike an attitude, he could give free rein to the geniality that was, indeed, his master quality. Mr. Cooke, who has written an excellent book on the bad thesis that Howells was great because he wrote like Verga, could have written an even better book on the profounder thesis that Howells is a failure because he did not write like Thackeray. The tragedy of Howells is that he toiled to suppress the best thing about him, which was himself; that self which fortunately slipped past his theories into his perfect style which is like Addison and Thackeray and Steele, and not at all like Flaubert.

HOWARD MUMFORD JONES.

#### A NEGLECTED IRONIST.

THERE is a process of embalming<sup>1</sup> accorded to many literary figures by which the features are preserved, as it were for all time, in a perfect and almost meaningless fixity; and in more cases than not it is only complete dissolution that ever alters the settled lines. Nothing is less subject to revision than the literary "character" of a man dead a hundred years; the term, indeed, could be made even shorter than that, and how many celebrities do not, before their deaths, see their permanent reputations take shape before their very eyes. This is of course less and less true in proportion as a man's genius approaches the universal and is likely to come to grips with many diverse temperaments: the features of a Shakespeare will vary almost as long as men's ideas are in flux. With a writer of intense but very special genius like Sir Thomas Browne, there is a particular danger from this kind of mummification; his reputation will be based upon the judgments of comparatively few readers, and among those few there will be a temperamental congruity. Has not Browne's name come to suggest to every literate mind the portrait simply of a seventeenth century lay mystic, given to a melancholy that is redeemed by its gentleness and to a kindly tolerance not very characteristic of his age? Now it has long seemed to me that in the "Religio Medici," his earliest and what must remain his most fascinating book, there is a strain of playful and even impish humour, a sly indirectness of expression, that entitle him to the distinction of being called an ironist. Yet one will search in vain for any hint of this in what has been said of him by Dr. Johnson or Coleridge or Pater, Dowden or Saint-

<sup>1</sup> "William Dean Howells, A Critical Study." Delmar Gross Cooke. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company. \$3.00.

bury or Gosse. Sir Leslie Stephen seemed to come close to it when he called Browne "a mystic with a sense of humour": but humour is a blanket term, and Sir Leslie does not appear to have detected any irony, *per se*, in the book.

A recent edition of the "Religio Medici,"<sup>1</sup> for school use, by Mr. W. Murison, supplies us not only with extremely full and illuminating annotations (of particular value for readers of so allusive a writer), but with introductory material on Browne's life, his language, his humour (but not his irony), and the arrangement of his topics in the "Religio" itself. Within the limits of a review it would hardly be possible to set forth all the elements that go to make up what I have called Browne's irony: a re-reading of the book would surely bring them out for any curious student. Every one knows the plan and purpose of the book: in spite of the "general scandal of his profession," the good doctor, but recently returned to England after protracted medical studies on the Continent, undertakes to put himself upon record as a devout Church of England man, an enthusiastic believer in the mysteries and miracles of the Christian religion. The first and longest part of the book is devoted to matters of faith, and the hope that should accompany it; the second part, to the virtue of charity and to some ingenuous self-revelation. After declaring that his adherence to the Christian faith takes the special form of allegiance to the English Church, and after setting forth his easy tolerance of other creeds and his distrust of mere contentiousness, he proceeds to examine "those wingy Mysteries in Divinity, and airy subtleties in Religion" which he professes to find so alluring. It is apparently the strain put upon one's credence that chiefly recommends a dogma or doctrine to him; Tertullian's "*Certum est quia impossibile est*" he quotes with evident relish. Except for this divine paradox, he would find many things in the Scriptures hard to reconcile with reason; in the same chapter in which Adam is told not to eat the fruit of the tree, it is said the rain had not yet fallen and no plants had grown; the trial of women's virginity ordained by God to the Jews, he says he has found "very fallible":

Experience and History informs me, that not onely many particular Women, but likewise whole Nations have escaped the curse of Childbirth, which God seems to pronounce upon the whole Sex; yet do I believe that all this is true, which indeed my Reason would perswade me to be false; and this I think no vulgar part of Faith, to believe a thing not only above, but contrary to Reason, and against the Arguments of our proper Senses.

If Sir Thomas's tongue was not in his cheek when he wrote that, I confess myself grossly at fault in estimating the probable effects of studying physiology and anatomy at Montpellier, at Padua, and at Leyden, during the sceptical early decades of the seventeenth century.

The essay proceeds from this point, a strange mixture of almost rhapsodic mysticism and shrewd, man-of-the-world philosophizing. When he comes to God's eternity, Sir Thomas finds a thorny problem in reconciling that with his Trinity, since the father-son relationship involved seems to suggest a priority of one part to another; when he comes to God's wisdom, he finds that its effects are chiefly revealed in nature, though the perception of more immediate causes frequently tempts him to easier explanations. The ram seen in the thicket by Abraham might have come there by accident, and "meer chance" might have led Pharaoh's daughter to the child Moses. He wonders whether Aaron's brazen serpent may not have been "worked by sympathy" (as we should say, by suggestion); whether Sodom may not have been burned by natural

causes, since it adjoined an asphaltic lake; whether manna was really miraculous, since it is known to be gathered daily in Calabria. He protests that he sees nothing insoluble in the question of how the pigeon that was sent out of the ark ever found her mate that was left behind; or in the question of where the soul of Lazarus waited, in the interim before his raising from the dead. There is nothing to tax a willing faith, he says, in the speculation on how Noah got into his ark of three hundred cubits all the kinds of creatures "not only in their own bulks but with a competency of food and sustenance." He quotes as absurd, yet in an equivocal connexion, the opinion of Justin that the Jews were driven out of Egypt for being scabbed. He wonders how Moses succeeded in burning the Golden Calf, since gold is known by science to be reducible only to liquidity; and he declares that chemists "facetiously affirm" that if the world in the end is destroyed by fire all things will be turned to glass, since vitrification is the "last and proper action of that element."—These queries and allusions are put forth in apparent seriousness, but surely even for so "extravagant and irregular" a head as Sir Thomas says his is, this is a strange way to assert one's faith. Are the following words, moreover, those of a man incapable of at least a gentle irony?

I confess there are in Scripture Stories that do exceed the Fables of Poets, and to a captious Reader sound like Gargantua or Bevis: Search all the Legends of times past, and the fabulous conceits of these present, and 'twill be hard to find one that deserves to carry the Buckler unto Sampson; yet is all this of an easie possibility, if we conceive a divine concourse, or an influence from the little Finger of the Almighty.

When Sir Thomas turns from matters of faith to an exposition of the virtue of charity, there is a truer ring of strong personal conviction in what he says, and a more pronounced unity of tone. He describes himself as a man quite incapable of holding national and personal prejudices, of condemning others for actions and opinions not natural to himself. Controversies and disputes, even in religious matters, he professes to find distasteful to him: "in all disputes, so much as there is of passion, so much there is of nothing to the purpose; for then Reason, like a bad Hound, spends upon a false Scent, and forsakes the question first started." It is this unequivocal—and gracefully worded—expression of intellectual charity and tolerance that gave Sir Thomas in his lifetime the reputation of being a sceptic, and that re-enforces one's feeling that much of what he says elsewhere is ironical. At no point does he seem farther from the acquiescence of a good churchman than when he speaks slightly of those "three Noble Professions," medicine, law, and divinity, and belittles the attempt to reach any infallibility in any of them; there are spiritual diseases, he says, as incorrigible by divinity as many cases are indissolvable by law: "I can cure Vices by Physick, when they remain incurable by Divinity, and shall obey my Pills, when they contemn their precepts."

It would be strange, indeed, if much that we find in the "Religio" were not a kind of irony; to interpret it thus is neither inconsistent with what we know about his life nor irreconcilable with other sides of his temperament. Surely the strong sense of human frailty and mortal insecurity which runs, with almost thematic insistence, through everything he wrote—but especially through the purple-patched "Urn Burial"—is itself frequently known by this name. In any case, it is difficult to take his professions of whole-hearted credulity with perfect seriousness, when we remember that his mind had early come into contact with some of the best scientific minds of the day, and that throughout his life he was in constant commun-

<sup>1</sup> "Religio Medici." Sir Thomas Browne. Edited by W. Murison. Cambridge University Press.

cation with many of them. He was an almost exact contemporary of Descartes; and one remembers that Descartes, after framing a philosophy that implied a complete religious scepticism, hedged on the religious question itself, and even evolved an elaborate proof of God's existence which could never have deceived him for a moment. All this can not be taken as establishing Sir Thomas's thoroughgoing scepticism or as denying the genuineness of much of his credo. His was far from being a careful or consistent philosophical mind; the reader who looks for perfect integrity of thought in Sir Thomas Browne is clapping his dish at the wrong man's door. That resolute determinist, Sir Kenelm Digby, in his "Observations" on the book, recognized that clearly enough: "Assuredly one cannot erre in taking this Author for a very fine ingenious Gentleman: but for how deepe a Scholler, I leave unto them to judge that are abler than I am." But Sir Thomas was a deeper scholar than his earliest critic gave him credit for being; and I suspect a shrewder ironist than any of his later critics have supposed.

NEWTON ARVIN.

### SHAKESPEARE FOR EVERYMAN.

ANATOLE FRANCE once suggested that criticism is to be the last of the arts; that when all the themes have been used and all the creative experiments tried, learned and sophisticated societies will find their aesthetic joys in an ever more subtle criticism of the works of dead masters. An Englishman, Mr. T. Sturge Moore, has put forth a slightly less pessimistic variant of the idea. Artists of the future, he says, might well employ themselves occasionally in rewriting the works of the older masters, boldly improving them where they think it possible. Whether Mr. Moore suggests Browning's "Sordello" as one masterpiece especially meet for such treatment I forget; but in any case he opens up a prospect of a sort of ultimate Browning, clear and pellucid, and the work of more than one generation of poets.

Although both these suggestions may seem fantastic, less subtle people than either M. France or Mr. Moore have put them into practice. I know a man whose father spent a large part of his life in—these are the very words of his son—"rewriting Shakespeare in blank verse." He believed that he could produce a version that might be read for pleasure or would be found useful in schools. But more learned people than he have, in a very timid way, been doing for Shakespeare something of the service that Mr. Moore suggests. They have been rewriting him for us, not essentially but textually. Any reader of the Literary Supplement of the London *Times* must have been struck by their activities. For instance, a few years ago they launched a concerted drive on the crux in "Othello," Act I, scene 1, line 21, wherein Iago remarks of Cassio, Othello's lieutenant, that he is

A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife—

which sounds clear enough until the reader discovers that Cassio is a bachelor. Although there were already five pages of conjectural emendations of this line in the Variorum edition, a correspondent of the *Times* Supplement brought forth a crop of new ones, the most plausible of which, perhaps, was that the line was misplaced, having been originally

Othello almost damned in a fair wife—

in which case the audience would have been let into the secret of Othello's marriage earlier in the play, and more opportunely. Another feature of these letters is the emendation of lines hitherto thought quite good. Nobody had ever found fault with the accepted text of Sonnet XCVI—

Some say thy fault is youth, some wantonnesse,  
Some say thy grace is youth and gentle sport

until another *Times* supplement correspondent suggested that it should read:

Some say thy fault is youthsome wantonness

—youthsome being a word used by Pepys and therefore at least possibly used or coined by Shakespeare, and the reading agreeing with the later lines of the sonnet and avoiding the unnecessary postulation, as in the old reading, of two sets of people. When we reflect that this stream of suggestions goes on almost continually in the *Times* and elsewhere, and that the number of lines in Shakespeare is finite, it is easy to see that some day we shall have had a conjectural emendation of every line in the original corpus. Nothing will be required then but an editor or two to sift them, and lo, we shall have a complete new Shakespeare.

But this tendency which, in its fulfilment, would delight the Utopian or please Mr. Sturge Moore, is calculated to madden the actual editor of Shakespeare. Both of the sample emendations which I have given above are plausible. In the phrase of the communist, What to do? The conservatives—for instance, Messrs. William Allan Neilson and Ashley Horace Thorndike, in their Tudor edition of the works in thirty-nine volumes<sup>1</sup>—answer: try to get back to the Shakespeare of the first texts; and the radicals—for instance, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and Mr. John Dover Wilson, the first volume of whose new Cambridge Shakespeare was reviewed in these columns about a year ago—say exactly the same thing, though perhaps with a different accent; incidentally proving once more that conservatism and radicalism are the same thing.

These thirty-nine volumes are interesting from more than one point of view—not the least important being that they are all edited by American scholars, a body of men who have done notable work in Shakespearean criticism. But in the present series their scholarship is not flaunted. They have edited a Shakespeare for the average man who wants to read Shakespeare for the enjoyment in it—which is not to imply that their work is not also good from the point of view of the textbook. Both from that angle and from the point of view of common sense they have done wisely in giving us a consistent and non-synthetic text. For each play they have chosen the text that is apparently closest to Shakespeare's original intention, and have expunged the later readings of editors, most of whom have emended by introspection and the grace of God, retaining only those emendations which are obviously correct and necessary, and always noting divergencies from the folio or quarto as the case may be. When cruxes are insoluble they frankly say so. Thus in the crux in "Othello" already referred to, they remark that Furness gives the passage up as hopeless and that Mr. Neilson suggests that the line is a trace of the original story which Shakespeare by oversight left standing after he had changed his mind about retaining that feature of the source. It is a very healthy thing that the ordinary reader should be reminded that Shakespeare could nod every bit as vigorously as Homer. On the other hand, the editors have modernized the punctuation; so that for the ordinary reader their edition has some of the advantages of the Cambridge edition in which the original rhythmical punctuation is restored; and they have designated act and scene-descriptions not in the original texts by enclosing them in brackets.

So much for the text. The prefatorial matter is to be commended for its brevity. It interposes as short a vesti-

<sup>1</sup>"The Tudor Shakespeare: In Thirty-nine Volumes," William Allan Neilson and Ashley Horace Thorndike, general editors. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$39.00.

bule as possible between the reader and the poet. We are given simply the source of the text and the date of composition, some remarks on sources; we are given a sketch of the stage-history, and then some remarks on "interpretation"—and these remarks are always brief. In one case, I feel like picking a quarrel. Professor Herbert E. Greene, speaking of Miranda's forthrightness of soul, quotes her saying to Ferdinand:

I am your wife, if you will marry me;  
If not I'll die your maid

and he adds, in a parenthesis "(i. e. maid-servant)." But did not Miranda really mean something more pointed, i. e., that if Ferdinand did not make her his wife, she would die unwed for love of him? Perhaps Professor Greene would reply that she was too innocent of the biology of marriage to make any such vow, and, if he is right, we must possibly sacrifice a fine line of poetry for the sake of the consistency of the drama.

The introductions, in so far as they deal with interpretation, are modern; that is to say, they are content to deal with the plays as plays, not as philosophies. Thus we are not told that Prospero is meant to prefigure the rise of the scientific spirit—as one German critic thinks: and Professor Stuart P. Sherman assures the readers of "Coriolanus" that they must not draw from the play the conclusion that Shakespeare was an aristocrat writing an anti-democratic play. The sanity of the interpretative work is especially evident in Mr. Raymond M. Alden's introduction to the sonnets. Mr. Alden is the editor of a Variorum edition of the sonnets uniform with the Variorum plays, and he does in this version what he does more elaborately in his larger work; he emphasizes the beauty of the poetry of the sonnets, balances nicely the factors of what might be called Elizabethan sonnet-commonplace and personal expression, and gently discourages the various types of mystery-mongers who seek in these poems either mystical or neurotic revelations. On the other hand, Professor Carleton Brown was not the best possible editor for the other non-dramatic poems. He can tell us, it is true, all we can expect to know about their dates and publication, but an editor who sees nothing in "The Phoenix and the Turtle" except insoluble enigmas, on the one hand—which we may grant—and, on the other hand, "merely an ingenious exercise" in which one detects certain influences, ought to confine his critical activities to the realm of prose.

But I must not end on a captious note, for this is taking it all in all, as good a popular edition of Shakespeare as one could desire. Its readers may learn from it to seek more elaborate critical apparatus, but what is given here unlocks all the actual poetry and drama—and that, after all, is the main thing.

LLEWELLYN JONES.

#### SHORTER NOTICES.

ANYONE who wishes to give as friendly a reception as possible to this, the last book<sup>1</sup> of our late Ambassador to Italy, will do well to bear in mind that it is made up of a series of lectures prepared for a university. Even with this allowance made, one's verdict will not be too favourable. Many of the pages possess a forthright, elementary character that is more likely to be successful with the undergraduate listener than with the maturer reader; and their *naïveté* is thrown into still higher relief by the purple passages, reminiscent of old-time Southern eloquence, which alternate with the more pedestrian ones, and which seem to be the peculiar temptation involved in the emotional and æsthetic approach to Dante. The diction is often undistinguished and uncomfortable, and capitalization and punctuation are individual-

<sup>1</sup> "Dante and His Influence." Thomas Nelson Page. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.00.

istic to the point of wilfulness. The volume, save for the absence of a detailed account of "The Divine Comedy," contains all the elements to be found in multitudinous other books on the same subject. Were this material less poorly distributed, it would make a fairly acceptable handbook for the student who is not far enough advanced to be exacting. After all, he may find other lacks compensated by a warm-hearted generosity of feeling.

H. B. F.

ALMOST alone among British poets of our time, Mr. G. K. Chesterton has succeeded in making poetry out of sheer high spirits. It is no accident that his verse-pattern and themes are frequently Macaulayan, or that his verse-pattern and rhymes are as frequently high-Gilbertian. His sense of the joy of conflict is as keen as Macaulay's, and his spirit of satire is as robust and as deadly as Gilbert's. "I do not understand," he says in the foreword to his new volume,<sup>2</sup> "why any verse that suggests a battle must necessarily suggest a defeat." The title poem, "The Ballad of Saint Barbara," suggests anything but a defeat; if it is less clangorous than "Lepanto," it is no less thunderously triumphant, and it is dashed with that heady mysticism of Mr. Chesterton's, absent from "Lepanto," which makes him a real poet where Macaulay and Gilbert were writers of verse. It is to be questioned, moreover, whether in a certain sort of brief satirical verse that is at once gay and withering, at once buoyant and derisive, he has his superior in modern verse; his "Elegy in a Country Church-Yard," his "Christmas Carol," and his "Songs of Education," in this volume, are worthy successors to his already classic "Antichrist." In other lyric veins he is sometimes commonplace; in these two he is as individual and as inimitable as, in spite of Mr. Max Beerbohm, he is in his best prose.

N. A.

THE maxim of Remy de Gourmont, "*Eriger en lois ses impressions personnelles, c'est le grand effort d'un homme s'il est sincère;*" finds a steady adherent in Mr. Middleton Murry. In the "Problem of Style," Mr. Murry explained at length the principles of criticism which he believes to be valid. In "Countries of the Mind,"<sup>3</sup> he tests special cases by these general principles. Mr. Murry has an extensive and flexible sensibility, a humility and a spiritual honesty rare among contemporary critics, and a gift for purely technical analysis that rivals that of Mr. T. S. Eliot, while his firm handling of the moral problem of literature makes Mr. Eliot's advances in that direction appear timid and gingerly. "Countries of the Mind" should restore a belief in the judicial function of criticism. This function apparently rests upon the skilled use of two tools, a standard of literary excellence—built in Mr. Murry's case upon Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Hardy—and a command of comparisons, especially well utilized in the chapter on John Clare, in which Clare, after being compared with Wordsworth, Keats and Collins, emerges in a surprising distinctness. Finally, Mr. Murry believes in the independence of criticism as an art, and formulates in his last chapter a complete method of critical creation. How far his method can carry may be perceived in the account of Baudelaire, in which Baudelaire's technique is exactly matched with his sensibility, his work is related to his integrated attitude towards life, and his attitude towards life is outlined against the decadent (to speak in the historical sense) forces of his society. It gives us, just as surely as does a poem by Baudelaire, that sense of completion which we call æsthetic: it has proportions, development and shape. Almost equally valuable are the chapters on "A Neglected Heroine of Shakespeare," which displays Mr. Murry's good sense as a textual expert; on Amiel whom he sees as a microcosm of the nineteenth-century mind; and on Flaubert, the latter a revolutionary estimate. Mr. Murry further commands our regard by his own dignified, lucid, exact and supple prose.

G. B. M.

<sup>1</sup> "The Ballad of Saint Barbara, and Other Verses." G. K. Chesterton. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.50.

<sup>2</sup> "Countries of the Mind." John Middleton Murry. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company. \$4.00.

## EX LIBRIS.

IN a little company the other night, I found that there existed a common prejudice against the revival of ancient languages and dialects. We were discussing the cultures of the various small States that are now scattered about Europe and the new Orient; and while scarcely anyone had a word to say against political nationalism, there was a pretty common distrust of cultural nationalism, particularly in the cases where it has sought expression through the revival of a regional language. The general opinion seemed to be that the Jews and the Irish—the nations that served as examples—might have as much political freedom, as they pleased, if only they would have the good sense to conduct their intercourse in English.

Now, the English-speaking people are great travellers; and who can blame them for wanting to hear their own language wherever they go? It makes the first ten minutes at a railway-station or a hotel far more comfortable, if the porter knows English. The English have introduced the bathtub in countries where the bath itself was almost unknown, and they have abolished many of the physical discomforts of travel by little devices like the spirit-lamp and the thermos-flask; so it is quite natural, perhaps, that they should seek to remove the spiritual obstacles to their comfort and convenience. Unfortunately, however, though the English sphere of influence is broad, the great majority of people on the planet have scarcely even heard of the language of Shakespeare, and those who have become familiar with the cockney patter of Mr. Kipling seem on the whole to dislike it; so that the notion that English is, can be, or should become a universal language is at present only a dream, "and not even a pleasant one."

THE prejudice against the multiplication of tongues is not altogether a mistaken one; but those who would like to see some existing national language become the universal medium of discourse, as French was once upon a time the common vehicle of diplomacy, are a little misled, it seems to me, by the notion that "painting the map red" will give a similar tint to the underlying population. It should be obvious, on the other hand, that the propagation of local tongues and cultures requires, if it is to serve civilization, a corresponding movement to build up a universal language. Without such a universal language a perpetual strife between national cultures, each seeking to absorb dissident elements, is bound to exist; particularly since this strife can be diverted and directed with much profit by the guardians of the national State. There is a genuine case for a universal language; there is likewise a case for numerous languages and dialects which are not officially recognized or countenanced by the existing State; but there is nothing to be said in favour of the predominance of any one national language over all the others.

INDEED, those who wish well of a language and a literature must be on their guard against having it spread over too wide an area. A language maintains its vitality, like some of the protozoa, by continual fission, as well as by fusion. The precious quality in a language, its vigour, its raciness—call it what you will—is not communicable over a wide area of the globe or among diverse peoples, precisely because this precious quality demands as a condition of its existence certain common scenes and common experiences, a certain intuition of reality, which can be shared only by a relatively small group of people. The English of the seventeenth century was alive down to its roots; but now that English words are used by people who no longer have the feelings or the images that were first associated with them, many of them have lost their vigour; and our daily conversation, to say nothing of our

literature, is full of dead limbs and withered flowers; in short, it has become—and is more and more becoming—cut and dried. The word that is used to convey a similar meaning to a hundred million people will often not carry its full content to any of them.

MACAULAY had this conception very firmly in mind when he wrote his essay on Milton. In that essay he says that "language, the machine of the poet, is best fitted for his purpose in its rudest state. Nations, like individuals, first perceive, and then abstract. They advance from particular images to general terms. Hence the vocabulary of an enlightened society is philosophical, that of a half-civilized people is poetical." What this means, when one allows for Macaulay's bias in favour of the Victorian Age as the peak and summit of human progress, is that the diffusion of a language, and in particular that divorce from the soil of shared experiences which goes with increasing sophistication, robs words of their colour, their flavour, their associations. This abstraction, as Macaulay characterized it, is the beginning of science and the death of literature; and when it takes place, a language becomes ineffectual, it would seem, for sounding the deeper notes. One might almost put the relation between language and culture mathematically: as the area of communication broadens, words become more thin and superficial, less related to the inner life and more dependent upon the constitution of the outer universe; so that the only subjects upon which one might expect an Eskimo, a Rumanian, and a Hindu to agree completely in meaning would be abstractions of number and logical relationship, or the concepts of physical science.

INDEED, not merely is the symbolism of mathematics our nearest approach to a universal language, but the reverse is true; and if we are to have an international medium of discourse, we should look for it, on a priori grounds, in a framework of speech that is as much the product of human artifice and technical ingenuity as, let us say, the infinitesimal calculus of Newton and Leibnitz. It is of the essence of an international language that it should fetch and carry only those experiences, those perceptions, those objects which are relevant to all the peoples of the globe irrespective of their personal and regional associations. Is Esperanto artificial? That, as Mr. A. L. Guérard points out in his interesting treatise<sup>1</sup> on an international language, is one of its most important merits.

IN sum, it seems to me not without reason that the century which saw the revival of a score of regional tongues and dialects—of Gaelic and Provençal and Hebrew, to mention only a few that already have a thriving literature—should also have seen the attempt to construct or, as in the case of simplified Latin, to revive an international language. These movements are in fact complementary; they signify that while the world is mechanically becoming more closely bound together, more standardized, more impersonal, and is thus overstepping national boundaries, it is becoming at the same time more local, more perverse, more egotistic, more intimate, and is shrinking within national boundaries; in fact, that "nations" and "national languages" are no longer satisfactory units of either culture or civilization. So far from making human intercourse more arid and difficult, these two movements, if they grow vigorously, promise to enrich the intellectual life; and both trade and culture will profit when one can communicate widely in a universal language, and deeply in a local one. So things stood in Europe in the sixteenth century, before the vernacular was propagated "for reasons of State"; and so, perhaps, they may stand again.

LEWIS MUMFORD.

<sup>1</sup> "A Short History of the International Language Movement." A. L. Guérard. New York: Boni and Liveright. \$4.00.

**N**OTHING is so startling in a society that seems to float along with neither rudder nor anchor, as a statement of fact. It is said that a body of academicians once worked itself up to fever heat in a dispute as to why a dead fish weighs more than a live one. Then somebody (probably an idiot boy) weighed a fish before and after killing it, and discovered—Well, try it on a fish.

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